



**Australian Government**  
**Department of the**  
**Environment and Energy**



**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**  
**Forum:**  
**The Environment and Energy Goals in**  
**Focus**

**Forum Report**

Monday 18 September 2017

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## Overview

The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy co-hosted its first stakeholder event on the environment and energy [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (the Goals) with the Australian Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ACIUCN) on Monday 18 September 2017.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The Forum was held in Sydney and was a great success - well attended by close to 100 leaders in government, business, industry, civil society, academia, and Indigenous and non-government organisations. It was a valuable opportunity to bring together a range of stakeholders for a first conversation on the environment and energy Goals and included focussed discussion on barriers, incentives and opportunities in relation to the Goals.



The Forum focussed on eight of the Goals:



Presentations in the morning sessions provided the overarching background and context behind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Goals from senior representatives from the Australian Government, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, WWF-Australia, and the Global Compact Network Australia.

The morning session also featured two Panels of subject-matter experts who provided an overview of their respective Goal, context about why the issue is important, their views on barriers, incentives and opportunities relating to the Goal, and interlinkages with other Goals that they had observed.

This was followed by two rounds of breakout group discussions where participants had the chance to discuss and explore barriers, incentives and opportunities for these Goals.

The afternoon sessions featured a Panel discussion on innovation with senior representatives from Geoscience Australia, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian National University and the National Australia Bank.

The final Panel featured presentations of case studies of partnerships for sustainable development. Featured case studies were between The Nature Conservancy and Google, Qantas and ANZ, and the Australian Business and Biodiversity Initiative, which is an example of a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral partnership.

Outcomes from the Forum will help inform the next steps in our approach to the Goals.

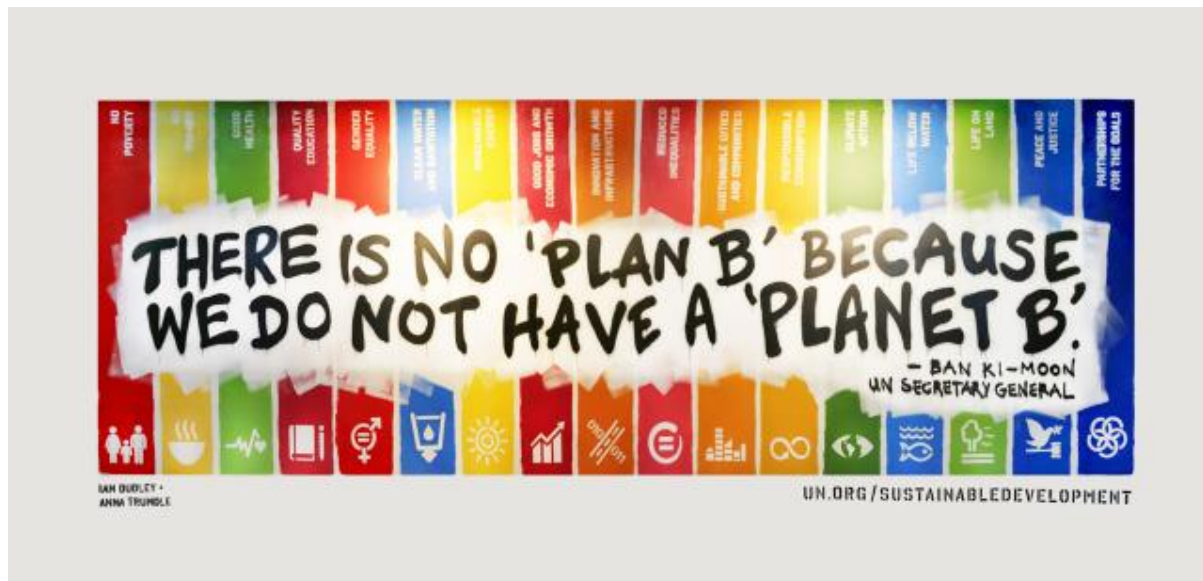


Image 1: Courtesy of Questacon

Further information on the Australian Government's engagement on the 2030 Agenda and the Goals can be found at:

- Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy - <http://www.environment.gov.au/about-us/international/2030-Agenda>
- Australia Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/2030-Agenda/Pages/default.aspx>

Further information about the Australian Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature can be found here: <http://aciucn.org.au>.

## **Introducing the Sustainable Development Goals**

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'We've got to look after what we've got because God's not making any more' – *Uncle Allen Madden, Gadigal Elder*

The Forum commenced with a Welcome to Country performed by Gadigal Elder Uncle Allan Madden. He acknowledged the theme for the day and said that it reminded him of something his Father once told him - 'We've got to look after what we've got because God's not making any more'. He recognised the growing interest in people wanting to make a difference and take care of their Country. This concept set the tone of the Forum – recognition that all individuals have a role to play in this Agenda and that we need to work in partnership to achieve it.

### **Dr David Gruen, G20 Sherpa, Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

Dr David Gruen gave the opening address. He highlighted that we are all united by our commitment to the 2030 Agenda and noted that is an ambitious, long-term road map. He acknowledged the application of this framework brings challenges for both developed and developing countries.

He noted that achieving this Agenda will require a new way of thinking and that while turning our gaze inwards can be uncomfortable, it presents a unique opportunity to accelerate action towards a sustainable future. He highlighted that to achieve this Agenda we need strong policy coupled with adequate financing and partnerships.

### **Peter Cochrane, Regional Councillor, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

Peter Cochrane opened by providing an overview of the IUCN's role and engagement with the 2030 Agenda. He highlighted the role the IUCN has played in all global conversations on nature and sustainable development, and that of the Australian Committee for IUCN, which has been active in convening events on the environment, conservation and sustainable development.

He noted the unique composition of the IUCN, comprising government and non-government members, and more recently Indigenous people's organisations. He discussed briefly the IUCN's commitment to sustainable development, particularly their interest in integration of the three pillars (environmental, social and economic) and the role they have played in the development of the SDGs, their targets and indicators. The IUCN has aligned their current work program to the SDGs and will contribute to the delivery of them through this. The IUCN will also play a role in supporting the reporting, monitoring and accountability to this Agenda and are the custodian of five indicators.

He noted that this Forum was an important step in the national conversation about the Goals, particularly given the 2018 High Level Political Forum will have an environment theme.

His hope for the Forum was that it would provide a good opportunity to explore multi-stakeholder partnerships, heighten our level of ambition and discuss strategies to provide assistance to our neighbours as well as reflect on the synergies between the Goals and targets. He was particularly keen for the Forum to explore linkages between environmental health and human health and wellbeing, which is an issue of great interest to the ACIUCN and IUCN more broadly.

**Natasha Smith, First Assistant Secretary, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Natasha provided an overview of the state of play on the 2030 Agenda from an Australian Government perspective. She highlighted the Australian Government's commitment to the Agenda, noting it is consistent with many of the Australian Government's international and domestic priorities across a range of sectors - health, education, agriculture, water, the environment, the economy, gender equality and social policy.

She briefly outlined the 30 years of history leading up to this Agenda, referencing the foundational document delivered by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, 'Our Common Future', which defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

She emphasised the significance of this Agenda, stating that a key difference between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals is that they have been universally agreed by all 193 UN member states and they have a domestic focus that is applicable to all countries. This Agenda is much broader than development from an international aid perspective - the ambition has been stepped up. She reaffirmed that it is an Agenda for everyone – applicable to both developed and developing countries and relevant to all sectors - governments, business, industry, civil society, academia and scientists.

She explained the Agenda comprises a number of commitments, including the Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, as well as other agreements that sit alongside it including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Humanitarian Summit's Grand Bargain as a blueprint for global action.

She spoke about the annual United Nations High Level Political Forum which is the designated body mandated to review global progress and to publish an



annual Progress Report on the Goals. She advised that every UN member state is expected to report twice over the life of the Agenda via a Voluntary National Review (the Review) and that Australia will submit its first Review in July 2018. This will be a useful opportunity to stocktake our achievements and showcase things we are doing well, as well as our challenges in delivering the Agenda domestically and internationally. Part of this process will include reaching out to state and local governments, the non-government sector and the private sector to tell Australia's story – the Review will not be solely focussed on what the Australian Government is doing but on what Australia is doing as a whole.

Natasha highlighted the focus of this Agenda is on multi-stakeholder partnerships across governments, private sector, civil society and others - it is not just about what governments can do. She also spoke briefly of the data requirements, noting that it is widely acknowledged that no country has data for all 232 indicators and there is no expectation that countries will report against them all. She also mentioned the importance of financing the Agenda which will be integral to achieve what we need to do.

Natasha concluded with the unifying message of the Goals which is to "Leave no one behind".

**Alice Cope, Executive Director, Global Compact Network Australia**

Alice outlined the role and mandate of the United Nations Global Compact, the World's largest corporate sustainability initiative, which is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to lead private sector engagement on the Goals. She explained the business contribution to the Goals is to 'act responsibly and find opportunity'.

Alice noted that businesses have been 'doing' sustainability and sustainable development well before the emergence of this Agenda but now the Goals provide a shared framework and blueprint for all organisations to work towards. With this new Agenda come new business opportunities as well as opportunities to strengthen stakeholder relations, particularly as policy makers increasingly align their interests and investment flows with the Goals. Stakeholders – governments, investors, civil society and others – are also increasingly articulating their expectations that businesses engage with and play their part in achieving the Goals.

She stated that the long-term vision is that achieving the Agenda will create a stronger and more stable operating environment for business. It is estimated that it will open up US\$12 trillion of market opportunities in four key economic systems: food and agriculture, cities, energy and materials, and health and well-being. The total economic prize from implementing the Goals could be 2-3 times bigger, assuming that the benefits are captured across the whole economy and accompanied by much higher labour and resource productivity.

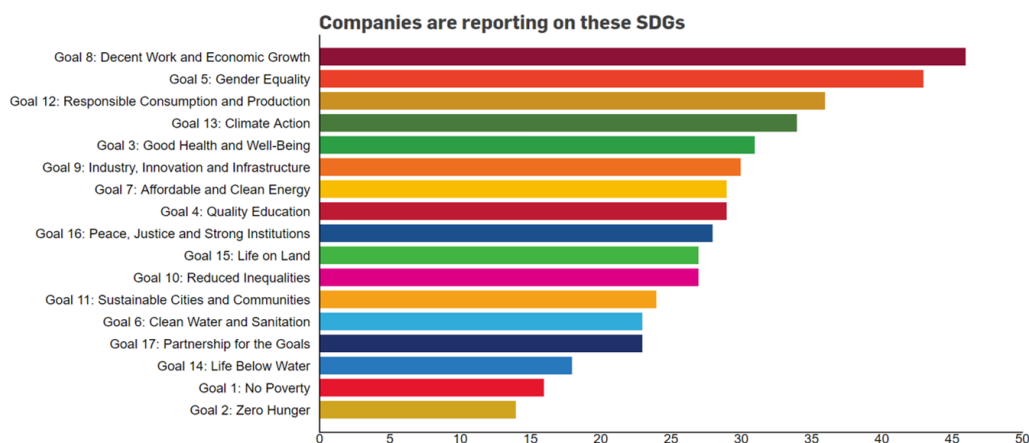
Business are responding in a number of ways such as by mapping their activities and impacts against the Goals (both positive and negative); aligning their frameworks and strategies with the Goals; shaping new initiatives and identifying partnership opportunities; communicating their engagement through their corporate and sustainability reports; and by participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues around implementation of the Goals.

Other initiatives happening in the business space facilitated by the Global Compact include the recent [CEO Statement of Support for the SDGs](#) – which was signed by 30 leading CEOs in 2016.

Alice explained we are now seeing companies include specific content on the Goals in their sustainability reporting – big banks, big telecommunications operators, retailers, and many others – and this is growing in number. The United Nations Global Compact is now capturing which Goals companies are reporting against (see Table 1 below). The United Nations Global Compact website has this data globally (and for each country) and also breaks it down by sector (including at the country level).

**Table 1: Activities to support advancing the SDGs in Australia**

## Activities to support advancing the SDGs in Australia



Source: UN Global Compact, aggregation of data in companies' Communications on Progress

The above graph presents an interesting picture of the importance of the environment and energy issues reflected in the Goals to business.

Companies are also starting to come together to drive sector initiatives. For example, mining and oil and gas sectors have developed 'atlases' for their sector on the Goals; the Australian water sector has recently launched a report showing how the urban water industry is already meeting challenges set by the Goals and to provide a framework to further advance the industry's contribution.

The United Nations Global Compact and partners have launched the [Global Opportunity Explorer](#) to share examples of companies undertaking activities relating to the Goals. A few examples include:

- Totohealth – which is using mobile technology to improve maternal and child health in Kenya and Tanzania. The company's personalised messaging platform uses SMS and voice technology to help mothers monitor pregnancies, keep parents on track with vaccination schedules, and provide nutrition and family planning advice.
- Fenugreen – which has developed sheets of paper (FreshPaper) that can be dropped into containers, boxes and bags of produce to keep food fresh in a scalable and sustainable way, while reducing resource and energy costs – this could transform the lives of the 1.6 billion people who still lack access to refrigeration.
- Tom Cridland – which has launched a 30 Year Sweatshirt, handmade with organic cotton by artisans in rural Portugal, and designed to last longer than almost anything in your wardrobe, and with free mending during its lifetime.
- Thermo King's CryoTech transportation refrigeration system – which reuses CO<sub>2</sub> for cooling, resulting in cleaner and greener deliveries of temperature-sensitive goods.

The investment community is also mobilising towards the Goals, in turn encouraging greater corporate action. We are also seeing the emergence of investment indices aligned to the Goals. Investors are increasingly asking about engagement with this Agenda.

Alice raised the importance of driving deeper private sector action as business as usual isn't going to achieve the ambitions of this Agenda. She highlighted there is significant risk for business if we don't take action, but not achieving the Agenda either at national or global levels represents a significant risk to the economy and to individual businesses.

Alice noted the need to move towards much more strategic engagement with the Agenda, beyond mapping and business as usual. Businesses are stating that clear signals on national priorities would be useful. Ensuring stakeholders keep emphasising their expectations that business contribute to the Agenda is also crucial.

She noted that many companies have already recognised that this Agenda presents an opportunity to identify other organisations with similar priorities for

collaboration. This has certainly started but remains a significant opportunity for scaling impact. The Global Compact is also developing guidance (launching soon) to support companies with reporting on their contribution to the Agenda.

Alice concluded by stating that to scale up private sector action and impact, we need to engage more companies. There are many companies we still need to reach to engage with this Agenda. This will be an ongoing task.

**Dermot O’Gorman, Chief Executive Officer, WWF-Australia**

Dermot recounted his recent experience at the Indigenous Rangers Forum in the Kimberley where he witnessed the strong connection of Indigenous people to their land and was impressed by the range of work underway by Indigenous rangers to manage their country. He noted that Indigenous ranger engagement is one of the greatest success stories in protecting the land, recognising the importance and value of Indigenous engagement and delivery in achieving 67 million hectares of Indigenous protected areas under management. This is an important story to tell in Australia’s Voluntary National Review.

He acknowledged the importance of passing on traditional knowledge to new generations. He recounted an experience he had while he was there that was pertinent to the Goals where he was shown by a traditional owner how to make a traditional fishing spear. The trick, he was told, is to make the pole straight so it flies through the air – however, most poles have a natural crook that can’t be straightened. The traditional owner showed how to work with the crook in the pole to make it fly. Dermot noted that this was an apt reminder that the Goals give us the pathway which may not be perfect, but we need to look past this and work with the imperfections to help hit the mark.

Dermot noted the important role undertaken by the Australian Government in shaping and pushing this Agenda and the Goals forward.

He noted the large amounts of data available that show the state and health of the planet and that impacts on biodiversity are clear. We are at a very important turning point with our biodiversity and need to be proactive as biodiversity continues to be under threat in Australia and around the world. Australia has a range of biodiversity hotspots and is an important place in the world in terms of biodiversity. The battle against biodiversity loss is best addressed when we work together, so partnerships will be key.

He acknowledged we have a key role to work in our region to lead and deliver on the Goals. He acknowledged the importance of working in partnership – reiterating that civil society, business and industry will play essential roles to achieve outcomes. Governments play a crucial role but are

stretched across priorities. He remarked that more money is needed to deliver at scale solutions and that there is a role for corporates in this space. Business, NGOs, civil society and all tiers of governments working together will be critical for success. He noted that the work of environment NGOs has been consistent over decades in their focus on these issues and they have a critical role to play in delivering on the Goals in both Australia and the Asia-Pacific. He reminded that this work needs to be reflected when we report on the Goals.

He used the energy and climate targets as an example of one of the biggest challenges we will face in meeting this Agenda and an area where we need to be bold, highlighting the need to look at opportunities to transform the market and reconsider 'business as usual'. He noted the need for bold decision-making which will require large-scale transformation and technology change. His closing remarks were that large-scale change may be a painful journey but is often necessary and can result in innovative new partnerships and opportunities for business and stakeholders.

## **Session 1: Understanding the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals**

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This session was facilitated by Julian Crawford, the Director of Ecosteps, a sustainability strategy consultancy.

The session was comprised of two Panel discussions. Each Panel discussion ran for 45 minutes. Panellists had 5 minutes to present on their Goal which was followed by interactive discussion and questions and answers from Forum participants.

The session aimed to provide a high-level overview of the environment and energy Goals, context about why these issues are important, highlight any opportunities and incentives for future engagement or known barriers, and identify any interlinkages and multiple benefits between Goals.

Panellists for this session were:

- **Nina Cullen, Executive Director Biodiversity, Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning** - Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-being
- **Professor Rob Skinner, Chief Executive Officer, Monash Water for Liveability** - Goal 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation
- **Victoria Adams, Director, Clean Energy Finance Corporation** - Goal 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy
- **Andrew Cole, Regional Sustainability Manager, Lendlease** - Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities
- **Dr Kate Ringvall - Country Manager Sustainability Retail, IKEA** - Goal 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production
- **Christopher Lee, Chief Executive Officer, Climate-KIC Australia Ltd** - Goal 13 - Climate Action
- **Professor Nic Bax, Director, Marine Biodiversity Hub, University of Tasmania** - Goal 14 - Life below Water
- **Jane Hutchinson, Chief Executive Officer, Tasmanian Land Conservancy** - Goal 15 - Life on Land

## **Panel 1 – Health, water, clean energy and cities**

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### **Nina Cullen – Goal 3 - Good health and well-being**

Nina emphasised the importance of interlinkages between health and nature, noting that this philosophy has been at the heart of Indigenous values for millennia due to their connection to Country. She noted that people with greater connection to nature experience positive psychological and physiological benefits – including stress reduction, increased work productivity, lowered blood pressure, fewer prescription medications, and strengthened immune systems, among others.

She stated the value of national parks to human health are notable – annual visits to parks in Victoria are estimated to contribute up to \$200 million in avoided health care costs through physical activity in nature. Parks that are regularly used and well maintained are fundamental to economic growth and vibrant and healthy communities.

The Victorian Government has recently launched Victoria's biodiversity plan, *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*, which incorporates priorities focused on human health and the environment. They have also launched the Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature 2017 between Parks Victoria and the Victorian Department of Health which was signed by the Ministers of both agencies.

Parks Victoria's 'Healthy Parks, Healthy People' initiative has been recognised in international fora – it was a high-profile issue at the IUCN World Parks Congress 2014 in Sydney and was reflected in a resolution of the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in 2016.

### **Professor Rob Skinner – Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation**

Professor Skinner spoke of the importance of the interlinkages between the Goals. He used a diagram from the Stockholm Resilience Centre to illustrate this point and described it as a wedding cake with the Goals for water, climate, oceans and land at the base as the underpinning Goals for a healthy planet that enable the people and prosperity Goals to be achieved.

The social and economic Goals need to operate in a safe operating space of a stable and resilient planet. He explained that the choices we make in rich countries in relation to these base environmental Goals have a spillover effect on poor countries' ability to achieve their Goals.

## THE GOALS ARE INTERLINKED



Image courtesy of the Stockholm Resilience Centre

He raised the point that delivering integrated resource management in human settlements and cities requires (1) Evidence based research, (2) Total societal evaluation framework (including policies and frameworks, whole of life assessment, total societal costs, all use of resources being valued equally, incorporating funding), and (3) Authentic collaboration and engagement (and authentic leadership – deep collaboration and engagement – depends on effective leadership, systemic approach, culture).

He emphasised the point of the 2030 Agenda is to 'Leave no one behind' and noted that this concept was fundamental to the Water Goal. He mentioned that life without safe water is a challenge for millions of people around the globe: 800 million people don't have access to water; 2.5 billion people don't have access to safe toilets; 1400 infants die each day from preventable water borne diseases.

	<h3>Life without safe water</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>800 million</b> people in the world do not have access to safe water.</li> <li>• 50% of all hospital beds in developing countries are occupied by people suffering from water related diseases.</li> <li>• 40 billion working hours are spent carrying water each year in Africa alone.</li> <li>• Women bear the brunt of water collection burden.</li> </ul> 	<h3>Living with no toilet</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2.5 billion</b> people worldwide live without a toilet.</li> <li>• Open defecation spreads disease – high infant mortality</li> <li>• Poor sanitation deprives women of privacy and exposes them to the risk of attack.</li> <li>• Diarrhoea kills more children every year than AIDS, malaria and measles combined</li> </ul> 
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He stated that one of the key challenges that we will face in meeting the Goals is impacts from rapid urbanisation. Opportunities exist for integrated water management and the creation of water sensitive cities – this is a good example of an integrated approach to achieve multiple Goals. He raised the water/energy nexus and the fact that both are fundamental but the demands on both are increasing.

He mentioned the importance of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) in driving solutions across stakeholders, providing knowledge transfer, and promoting solutions, policies and public education for sustainable development.

To achieve this Goal, Professor Skinner stated we need effective and authentic leadership with successful collaboration and quoted Ken Matthews AO, stating that ‘any future system needs to be: more transparent; more independent; and considerably more effective than the current system’.

### **Victoria Adams – Goal 7 – Affordable and clean energy**

Ms Adam noted that this was a hot topic in Australia. Globally there are a number of people that have not traditionally had access to electricity and still a large number not able to access electricity. With rapid urbanisation the demand for energy is only going to increase.

She mentioned the ongoing challenge is how to ensure access to affordable energy, for example by increasing renewables in the electricity grid. She raised the point that we need to focus on demand and options to lower electricity usage. For example, commercial and residential buildings in Australia are responsible for 23 per cent of our greenhouse gas emissions, which is an area that could be focused on.

She also pointed out that despite this, we know the built environment can deliver rapid and cost-effective reductions to emissions and energy consumption using technologies and approaches that are widely available today. Ms Adams stated that we have some of the best renewable energy resources in the world which we now have the opportunity to turn our attention towards and take advantage of.

One issue she highlighted as of particular importance that should be addressed as a priority is improving energy efficiency in buildings and updating building codes to avoid issues in the future. She noted that the energy Goal has linkages across all the Goals, including health, and that one of the key barriers to addressing this Goal is policy uncertainty.

### **Andrew Cole – Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities**

Mr Cole highlighted the pressures of rapid urbanisation and the vital role that this Goal will play in ensuring a sustainable future. He stated that a core priority for this Goal is to integrate resilience, affordability, productivity, and liveability into cities.

He highlighted how fundamental and interlinked this Goal is to many of the Goals – over half the world's population (3.5 billion people) is living in urban areas with this figure predicted to reach two thirds within 20 years. Cities, especially in developing countries, are faced with the challenges of providing access to basic services (such as housing, transport, water and waste management), and addressing energy consumption and health issues caused by urban density.

He noted that cities house financial capital and human capital – they need to be both productive and liveable – and that this is a huge global challenge. By 2050, it is estimated that cities will need to accommodate an additional 2.5 billion people. In 1990 there were 12 mega cities (defined as housing over 453 million people); now there are 28 mega cities which is projected to grow to 41 by 2030. Cities consume 75 per cent of the world's natural resources, 80 per cent of the global energy supply and produce approximately 75 per cent of the global carbon emissions.



He stated that buildings are key to establishing sustainable development patterns, as the sector consumes 40 per cent of the annual energy consumption, 20 per cent of the annual water usage, and generates up to 30 per cent of all energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. He mentioned the work of Lendlease on building sustainability, highlighting the new Barangaroo development in Sydney which will be the first CBD precinct of its scale in Australia to be carbon neutral. The Towers of Barangaroo have a Green Star Design rating, and other buildings throughout the complex have a 5 and 6 star Green Building rating.

He spoke about the importance of green design and Green Buildings. He noted that existing buildings are one of the biggest challenges in terms of retrofitting to improve energy efficiency and environmental performance – and that this is a challenge for Australia. He also stated that while we need to look at the whole building performance, we also need to look into tenant behaviour.

He noted a key opportunity in Australia is to focus on growing innovation and technology to replace jobs that are being lost by coal sector disruption and /or closure. A key focus for Australia could be to rebuild the clean energy sector.

Mr Cole spoke of the work of the Green Building Council of Australia voluntary rating system for buildings – he noted that this has had a positive impact on the sector. He encouraged collaboration and partnership stating 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together'.

### ***Comments from the floor***

1. *Building codes* – a lot of builders are using good standards but many of the general codes don't incorporate new technologies. Good design and construction standards are key. Existing buildings are the biggest challenge – 97 per cent of existing buildings probably existed more than 30 years ago and don't meet current standards – upgrading these will be a key challenge.
2. *Clean energy transformation* – this shift will have wide-spread impacts. For example, loss of livelihoods from coal mine closures has resulted in impacts on community resilience and mental health. All sectors must contribute and lead to address sustainable development issues. Governments (across all levels) need to show leadership. It will be a disruptive time for many sectors requiring a long-term vision and consistent policy to build renewables so we have to have an orderly closure of coal fired power plants. We need to consider impacts on employment in communities reliant on the coal industry as well as focus on innovation and technology.

## **Panel 2 – Responsible consumption and production, climate action, and marine and terrestrial conservation**

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### **Kate Ringvall – Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production**

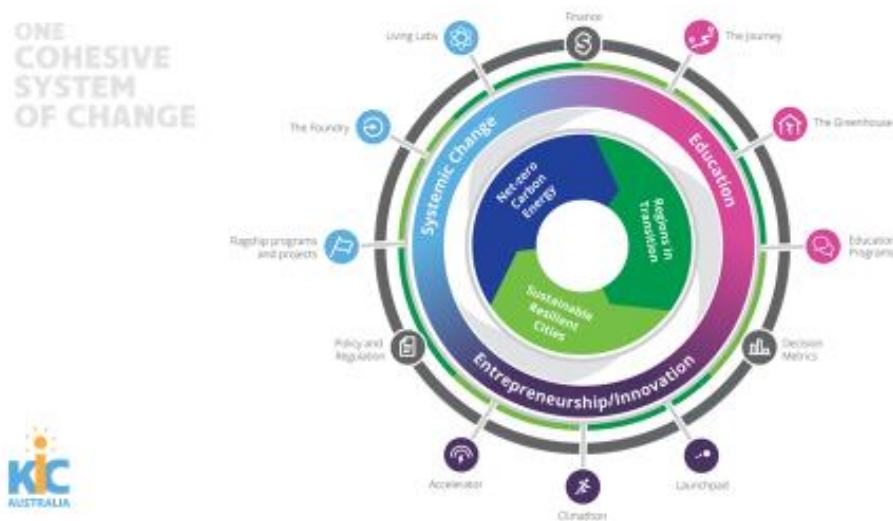
Ms Ringvall gave an overview of IKEA's history and views on sustainability principles. She highlighted that IKEA has always had a sustainability focus emphasised through their principles of responsible consumerism and product development. Their business model is founded on the idea that they could 'do more with less'.

IKEA has a sustainability strategy that focuses on core principles of democratic design – form, function, sustainability, quality and low price. They aim to design products that people want to buy and that have a life cycle including end use – for example, they currently recycle mattresses which are taken through to Soft Landing (mattress waste recycling organisation) and broken down into parts. They are also looking into sofa recycling. Considering the full lifecycle of the product is embedded in IKEA's business model.

IKEA stores currently recycle 80 per cent of their waste – their national aim is to increase the recycling rate and to target zero waste. IKEA focuses on making items that can be repaired with parts that can be replaced. They are conscious about building the awareness of consumers of the full life of the product (responsible consumerism) and to consider what happens to the product at the end of its life. Their ultimate aim is to expand their product recycling. Improving product recycling is an ongoing focus and challenge as many local communities and local governments don't have capacity to support this.

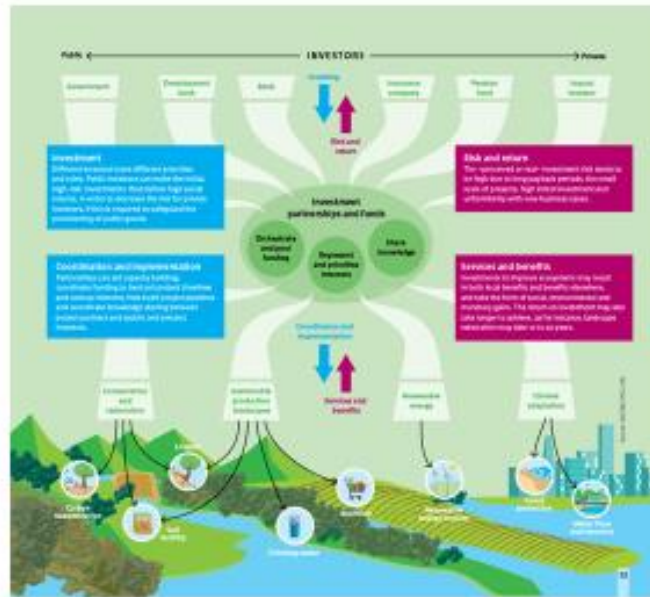
### **Christopher Lee – Goal 13 – Climate Action**

Mr Lee gave an overview of the targets and indicators under the Climate Action Goal. He noted that on the surface, while the Goal may seem high level, once you break it down and consider all its components there is a lot that is applicable to all stakeholders, not just government.



Mr Lee explained the role of finance in helping achieve the Goals using the picture below and reiterated that public funding alone won't be sufficient to enable us to reach the Goals – he stated investor and commercial funding will be important.

#### Role of Finance Across the SDGs



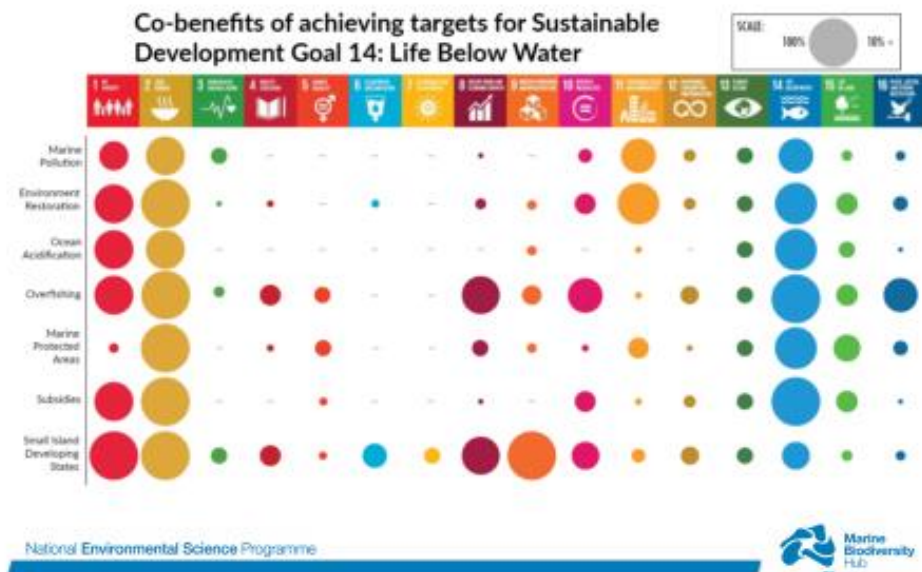
#### **Professor Nic Bax – Goal 14 – Life below Water**

Professor Bax highlighted that this Goal is particularly relevant to Australia – we have the world's third largest Exclusive Economic Zone, and we are surrounded by countries in the Pacific for many of whom 90 per cent of their GDP comes from the oceans.

Professor Bax noted that the Goals interact with other policy and reporting instruments, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. We therefore need to be conscious of the burden of reporting, particularly on developing countries, as we will be increasingly required to report against multiple sets of indicators.

He highlighted that there are opportunities to meet more than one Goal or target with some initiatives. He outlined the co-benefits of achieving the targets for SDG 14 (see table below).

## Interactions with other SDGs



Professor Bax gave an overview of how Australia is tracking against the targets under SDG 14 (see below) but advised that some of the targets could be better to enable more comprehensive tracking and monitoring of issues.

SDG	Target	Australian Context
14.1	Marine pollution	SOE Nutrient pollution SOE Marine debris
14.2	Restoration	SOE: Would contribute to resilience but lacks coherent national strategy.
14.3	Ocean acidification	SOE Ocean acidification
14.4	Overfishing	SOE Tuna & billfish SOE Shelf fish species
14.5	Protected areas	Australian Marine Parks 39.85% of marine area
14.6	Fishing subsidies & IUU Fishing	Cooperative surveillance and enforcement Pacific CSIRO and GOOGLE
14.7	SIDS	Additional maritime boundaries support (building on EPOG)
14.a	Capacity Development & Technology Transfer	Support for region especially SIDS. Sustained Capacity Development.



Professor Bax reiterated the point that achievement of the Goals cannot be done by governments alone, and that investment to meet the Goals will need to include a range of stakeholders. He stated the difficulties faced in getting industry to invest in the marine environment and that a priority needs to be on engaging business and industry. He would also like to see enhanced work with small island developing states to improve their capacity to meet the Goals.

### **Jane Hutchinson – Goal 15 – Life on Land**

Ms Hutchinson highlighted the importance of this Goal and the vitalness of protecting our ecosystems and species. She noted we fundamentally depend on nature – it gives us clean air, clean water, healthy soils, pollinates our crops and provides an endless list of services. She reiterated that we cannot exist on this planet without greater protection of species and ecosystems – she stated that biodiversity is what we survive on. She highlighted that each of the Goals are intrinsically linked to life on land, but that we are continuing to lose biodiversity globally at a rapid rate. This is particularly evident in Australia.

She pointed to the [State of the Environment Report 2016](#) as a guiding framework that tells us what we need to do and gives us a path forward, but that we need a long-term plan. We need to look beyond political terms and well into the future, even beyond the proposed lifespan of the 2030 Agenda, perhaps 100-200 years into the future to plan what we want this planet to look like. At the moment we are only planning for periods within our lifetime – the definition of sustainable development talks about intergenerational equity which is something we still don't properly consider. She posed the question of how we marry the Goals together when some of them appear to be in competition with each other and stated that we need to move beyond silos and look at them holistically.

She referred to the work of Professor John Knox, the first ever United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, noting that the concept of intergeneration equity and the right to a healthy environment has been captured in his work, stating that all people have the right to benefit from nature for their livelihoods, but that this needs to be planned and must factor in biodiversity conservation and the preservation of healthy ecosystems.

### ***Comments from the floor***

1. *Marine targets* – Professor Bax was asked to expand on his point about improving the marine targets. Professor Bax explained that in the marine space, measurement tends to be based on input management indicators, i.e. have you preserved 'X' amount of this or that, without regard to whether this action was successful. He stated there needs to be more focus on environmental output indicators, i.e. whether there was a measureable

reduction in pressure, or a measureable improvement in the managed feature.

2. *Funding cycles* – a point was made about the need to address long-term funding and that this really needs to be a focus. Ms Hutchison agreed that we need long-term funding and a range of ways to diversify funding through innovation, for example impact investing, green bonds. Ms Hutchison recognised however that there are no quick fixes. She agreed with the point that we need the involvement of the business and philanthropic community

3. *Embedding sustainability in organisational culture* – IKEA was noted for drawing on old values of responsible consumption - they employ through those values and produce through those values and note that both the consumer and the producer have responsibility relating to consumption.

4. *Impact of climate change on business* - it was noted that climate change impacts are critical for businesses. It was also noted that there is a disconnect between long-term decision-making and long-term investment. Focus is also largely on disaster funding, response and recovery rather than mitigation of impacts.



## Session 2: Exploring the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals – barriers, incentives and opportunities

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This session was comprised of two breakout group discussions of 45 minutes each. The Panellists from the above session led two rounds of breakout group discussions of 8-9 people on their respective Goal. Discussion focused on **barriers, incentives and opportunities** in implementing the environment and energy Goals.

### Goal 3 - Good health and well-being

#### Key points from discussion:

- There is now strong evidence of a strong link between the health of our environment and human health and wellbeing.
- Policies and programs tend to focus on the link between environment and human health from a detrimental impacts perspective from poor quality environments (e.g. impacts of pollution); however, there is now strong and emerging evidence that there are benefits of high quality environments for human physical, mental, cultural, spiritual and social health.
- Up to now the available evidence on the benefits of nature and greenspace for human health and wellbeing has not been well translated from the academic field into policy and practical knowledge for the health sector (e.g. GPs and allied health professionals).
- Some significant recent milestones for changing attitudes, such as IUCN Resolution 64 from the 2016 World Conservation Congress and the recent signing of the *Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature*, co-signed by the Health and Environment Ministers, are both resulting in improved global and regional partnerships between the WHO and IUCN and more broadly sending a strong message that the environment and health sectors need to work more closely for mutual benefit, including response to climate change.
- There are still significant 'cultural' hurdles to recognising the contribution of nature and greenspace for human health and wellbeing benefits.
  - The preventative health budget is still less than three per cent of the total health budget.
  - Treatment of clinical disease (including with pharmaceuticals) is much higher priority than nature or more holistic solutions.
  - Limited clinical research to quantify the 'dose response' of nature and greenspace for physical, mental and cultural health.

#### Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities

##### Barriers:

- Benefits (value) of nature and greenspace for human health and wellbeing has not been well translated from the academic field into policy and

practical knowledge for the health sector (e.g. GPs and allied health professionals).

- Short-term 'quick fix' rather than long-term preventative view - the health industry is based on clinical solutions with assumption that they will solve the world's health problems. Long-term prevention needs to happen more holistically rather than looking at pills or medication for solutions. This mentality is prevalent throughout medical education.
- Silos – these are still prevalent across all areas. We need to remove silos in research, planning, and policy.

#### *Incentives:*

- Pilot initiatives and funding.

#### *Opportunities:*

- There are many opportunities for integration, collaboration and sharing across the sector as well as other sectors. Opportunities exist to build case studies where we can show success.
- The health and environment sectors need to work more closely in integrating policy and plans at the national and regional scales as well as communicate available evidence to policy makers.
- There is an opportunity to re-message health and environment linkages by noting that Government requires partners to manage for 'wellness' not just treat illness.
- The health and environment sectors need to work much more closely in developing benefit metrics and develop more opportunities for adaptive clinical research to test response including in-field case studies in conjunction with land and water managers.

### **Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation**

#### **Key points from discussion:**

- The value of water is not widely understood. The cost structures and market incentives are currently skewed without adequate value placed on clean water and sanitation.
- There is a false dichotomy of competition (i.e. environment vs irrigation) and a lack of understanding that every industry and community needs a healthy system.
- There is a lack of public debate on water and no 'burning platform' for visibility. The Goals, however, provide a platform to raise the profile of water issues and can be used to generate a water literate community.

- Planning, governance and institutional arrangements are hampered by the breadth and complexity of issues. Uncertainty (e.g. climate, population) is not reflected in planning.
- Progress is hampered by the short-term focus of projects and planning as well as siloed governance structures. This 'siloing' leads to a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- Lack of government policy on water as a natural resource. Where it is legislated there is a lack of enforcement, especially at local levels.
- There is not enough funding and resourcing, especially for sustainable water management, and difficulty in targeting available funding as well as accounting for expenditure and demonstrating return on investment.
- A key challenge will be delivering on the Goals in remote areas, especially in Indigenous communities.
- Measurability of outcomes is also difficult – there is a lack of evidence base and insufficient access to long-term data to allow us to report on and target future interventions.

### **Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

#### *Barriers:*

- Alignment of value – lack of public debate on the value of water and its value is not well understood.
- Planning and governance – the breadth and complexity of the issue, uncertainty and short-term focus of policies and programs, as well as siloed governance structures are key barriers.
- Funding and resourcing – there is not enough funding available to address the challenges.
- Measurement and reporting – there is a lack of data to support understanding of the issues.

#### *Incentives:*

- Look into incentives and rewards for addressing the Goals through government funding.
- Incentive-based schemes such as rain water tank schemes, water reuse and recycling, investment in water efficiency measures for households.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Use Goals as a platform to raise the profile of water issues and impacts of drought and enable a water literate community.
- Use participatory processes to develop shared vision and understanding of problems.
- Develop tools such as cost-benefit analysis and environmental-economic accounting to build an understanding of the value of water which can then be built into policies and cost-reflective pricing.

- Build integrated governance structures that can reflect interdependencies between the Goals and bring different players and skill sets to the issue e.g. social scientists.
- Look at collaborative investment structures and cross-subsidisation models through a corporate social responsibility lens (e.g. commercial urban investment with Indigenous remote requirement).
- Look into mandatory reporting and improve transparency, accountability and accessibility of water information and use.
- Use technological innovation, satellite data, water metering to measure outcomes where money is spent.

## **Goal 7 – Affordable and clean energy**

### **Key points from discussion:**

- Significant issue is energy policy uncertainty – there has been a lack of clear government policy and a clear plan to transition to a clean energy future. This has made investment decisions difficult.
- High energy prices add to opportunities - progress may come from crisis.
- There are competing business priorities which drive a reluctance to change when status quo is easier to retain.
- Silos across all players (government, business, industry and community) in both policy decisions and regulation. Cross-industry collaboration is missing.
- There are also issues with managing competing interests from lobby groups – different agendas come into play.
- Clean energy is generating massive community support but there is a lack of access to information and transparency in opportunities, for example, the general public has difficulties in finding out about investing in clean energy as well as understanding the issues relating to energy affordability and reliability (i.e. low level of energy 'literacy' and misinformation about the issues can drive inertia).
- The complexity of the issue is huge as it involves a complete overhaul of the energy system – Australia's current infrastructure and regulatory frameworks are built on antiquated systems.
- There has historically been a lack of support for new energy technology and talent in the market which leads to it moving off shore.
- There are social and economic issues and impacts that need to be taken into account from transitioning to clean energy, in particular impacts on those working in non-renewable energy sector. Planned transition is key.
- There need to be improvements in data and technology to better manage supply and demand based on usage.
- Building codes need to be addressed to incorporate greater energy efficiency and clean energy technology.
- Greater incentives to transition to renewables are required. Need to acknowledge that for business, clean energy investment is about long-term

gain – it will enable longevity in their business model, lead to lower bills and support reduction of GHG emissions (corporate responsibility).

- Need to consider financial incentives such as capital gains tax for investing in renewable energy, stamp duty exemptions or tariff returns for renewable investment.
- We need to position Australia to be competitive internationally by looking at what other countries are doing.

### **Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

#### *Barriers:*

- Lack of clarity in government policy and lack of long-term planning.
- Lack of public understanding of issues and complexity of industry leading to inertia.
- Strength of lobbyists in maintaining status quo.
- Maintaining an export focus rather than protecting local industry.
- Lack of support for new technology and talent.

#### *Incentives:*

- Innovative financing - bonds, virtual networks (buying, selling and sharing).
- Incentives to assist home owners and renters who can't afford large outlays in transitioning to solar.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Focus on bipartisan support and agreement on long-term energy policy with a focus on market stability.
- Look at energy sector as an avenue to build a highly skilled and technical work force driven by innovation and technological improvement – opportunity to rebuild a workforce in energy sector and other industries (e.g. car industry through battery operated cars - Norwegian approach for subsidy for non-petrol cars).
- Improving technologies around storage, decreasing cost of solar, as well as opportunities to value add prior to export. Could set aggressive targets which will drive technology.
- Look at improving building codes for greater energy efficiency.
- Focus on consumer awareness, understanding, responsibility and accountability and integrate into education at all tiers.
- Look into options for local government to become renewable energy 'hubs' and drive community engagement on clean energy and sustainability.
- Look into removing subsidies for non-renewables.
- Focus on improving data and storage to address demand management, allowing switch-off at certain times for monetary benefit.
- Re-badge clean energy target to something else (perhaps an affordable energy target) - play with messaging to get greater buy-in.

## **Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities**

### **Key points from discussion:**

- Key issue is lack of consultation and engagement between all stakeholders (states and territories, federal agencies, cities themselves, citizens and local communities) and lack of understanding about how citizens can be involved in planning.
  - Impacts of this have led to people alienated from nature – we are missing the link between humans and nature. We need to plan for people and make decisions for the health of citizens.
  - Need to build shared value of community, based on compassion and caring – encourage face to face interaction.
- Emerging conflict between where people want to live and where they work - focus is on building commuting hubs and not community hubs. We need to look at where people live, work and play and their mental and physical wellbeing. With this comes the necessity to look at public transport-oriented development – need to map transport hubs to people hubs and ensure efficient and effective transport. Consider options such as free public transport and promoting walking, cycling as viable transport.
- Lack of long-term planning, funding and investment in infrastructure – we need to consider how can we make capital flow through to generate the right outcomes.
- Improve consumer education and understanding of the value of social and environmental investments as well as environmentally responsible behaviour. As part of this we need to consider whether our schools are equipping our children for the jobs of the future and promoting comprehensive education for sustainability – education and skills for jobs that are required to create sustainable cities will be essential.
- Lack of understanding and shared values about what constitutes a sustainable community/city – hampered by inconsistent policy and regulation as well as a lack of coherence and integrated planning around sustainable cities, and a lack of performance targets – how will we know when we get to the point where we can measure if a city is 'sustainable' or how far away we are from that point?
- Need to move beyond traditional status quo – we keep using traditional ideas for building to deal with the present that doesn't take into account the future or look at problems holistically. We need to view technology as an accelerator.
- Regulation needs to keep pace with innovation. Without change in regulation and building codes, large-scale change can be hard.
- Siloing is an issue across policy, planning and funding. In particular, spending is being done in a silo, e.g. funding for roads is done in a silo and does not take into consideration other modes of transport.
- Existing built environment itself is a barrier - we need to encourage the reuse of buildings and look into low cost technology for retrofitting.
- Consider tax reform so money raised through tax goes back to communities where it was levied – this could incentivise local communities.

- Education around sustainable investment opportunities – i.e. with superannuation, should we be educating citizens to be active drivers for sustainable investment.
- Lack of forecasting and use of data to project trends in the environment and resource availability – we have a lot of information at hand but we are not using it as well as we should to project into the future.
- Need to look into promoting local food production – build the infrastructure and systems so communities in cities can grow and eat local, and support city food production.
- Learn from international experiences.

### **Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

#### *Barriers:*

- Multiple stakeholders, multiple funding streams, all of which is siloed in nature.
- Cities have people at their core but they often aren't engaged in planning and aren't the beneficiaries of the plans when they come to fruition.
- Lack of understanding and shared value.

#### *Incentives:*

- Tax could be spent where it is levied.
- Encourage shared value/risk.
- Ethical investment structures for public spending.
- Superannuation can be used as a lever.
- Encourage unsolicited bids to drive innovation.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Promote shared value and collaborative decision-making across all stakeholders.
- Link into performance frameworks for cities internationally and learn from innovation going on around the world.
- Create strong, open and long-term policies, governance arrangements, planning and performance framework for cities, coupled with long-term investment strategies.
- Use communities to address problems using incentives such as tax reform.
- Ensure building standards and regulations are contemporary and reflect innovation and new technology, as well as allow for flexibility.
- Consider decentralisation – moving jobs out of cities and creating options for people to downsize to smaller, more sustainable dwellings.
- Look at private sector opportunities for social and sustainable impact investment and public housing options.

## **Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production**

### **Key points from discussion:**

- In most cases, costs are not appropriately valued through the lifecycle of a product or service - disconnect between the cost to buy a product and the cost to dispose of it. Cheap (or free) disposal was considered a barrier.
- The perception is recycling is the answer when more focus needs to be placed on minimising or preventing the production of waste in the first place. Valuing waste streams / recovered products could change behaviour as well as open up possibilities for new markets in secondary products.
- The difference between 'cheap but poorly made' vs 'low-cost and well-made' products was noted as well as the impact of short warranties on consumption which could be countered with an import tax on goods with short warranties.
- Lack of understanding of consumer preferences, expectations, behaviour, and trends around sustainability, and that there is a lack of choice for sustainable and cost-effective products. An educated consumer-base offers new opportunities for business.
- There is a lack of sustainability literacy and a common understanding between consumers and business, and across the product / service lifecycle, of what a 'sustainable' good / service is and what 'sustainability' means in a technical sense. There are generally no minimum standards for 'sustainability' i.e. no certification / authentication, and the groups felt this left it open to wide interpretation. The groups considered that, without some standardisation or consistency in defining and talking about 'sustainability', the Goals could be in competition with one another. For example, often organic product in supermarkets is highly packaged. Participants considered that confusion in language and a lack of definition of key terms create difficulties for understanding the demand for 'sustainable' products and therefore how business positions its products / services in that context. The groups felt this also leads to difficulties in setting a baseline and determining how business can exceed it. Participants felt that authentic and accurate messaging about 'sustainability' can be difficult to convey, and that there is a degree of consumer apathy.
- Lack of supply chain transparency about the true cost of inputs (e.g. labour) across the supply chain. Consumers could benefit from understanding more about where their products come from, and that business could do more to value the risks (e.g. reputation and costs) that arise from a lack of understanding / transparency or integrity in the supply chain.
- Current organisational structures and thinking influenced by latent or legacy issues as barriers, including institutionalised / status quo thinking and value sets and the challenges these present for valuing the long-term, especially when risk strategies etc are thought about on shorter timeframes.



- Participants considered that national benchmarks, certification and ratings schemes (e.g. product labelling) can provide an important point of differentiation that enables consumers to make comparisons between products and can mobilise consumer choice. In turn, they can provide an incentive for businesses to achieve high ratings / certification as this enables them to differentiate their brands and capitalise on first-mover advantage, with scope to build brand loyalty with consumers.
- Linked with benchmarks and ratings, participants also discussed the role that associated metrics have in assisting business to set targets, demonstrate and communicate progress towards benchmarks, and differentiate the performance of their brand from others. Robust and consistent metrics would enable businesses to build their brand profiles through increased transparency and reporting, incentivise further improvement, and enable them to demonstrate leadership within their industry.
- Governments could incentivise change in business by preferencing sustainability in procurement policies which would send an important market signal and incentivise businesses to offer sustainable products and services in order to compete for government business. There was also discussion that this approach could act as an incentive to governments if these sorts of procurement choices could also reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of delivering public services / interventions.
- Levies and tax measures were raised as options to incentivise waste reduction while at the same time funding development of waste management and recycling infrastructure.
- Tax measures were considered by participants to be an incentive or a disincentive, depending on their application.
- Responsible consumption and production could offer potential new customers, markets and revenue streams and scope for valuable brand differentiation.
- The groups also identified the potential to reduce costs and generate cost efficiency, with potential to build consumer trust, leading to market value.
- Participants considered that there are opportunities for development of new companies and new markets which could disrupt incumbents and precipitate further change.
- Renting versus purchasing was raised as an opportunity to build a 'sharing economy'.
- Education for future generations as an opportunity in relation to this Goal. They considered that, as the next generation of consumers, their value-sets will reflect the issues the Goals cover and they will actively engage and have greater access to more information than ever to guide their consumption decisions.

**Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

*Barriers:*

- Lack of consumer choice.

- Lack of understanding of consumer expectations and preferences.
- Valuing life cycle costs – lack of transparency.
- Externalities/true cost of goods and services.
- Lack of literacy around terminology – sustainability term a barrier to this issue.

*Incentives:*

- Benchmarks and ratings.
- Metrics.
- Government leadership.
- Reduced regulatory burden.
- Fiscal incentives, price signals, government procurement, tax incentives/removing disincentives (e.g. energy upgrades in homes).
- Research and development.

*Opportunities:*

- New customers, markets, brand differentiation, reduced costs.
- Supply chain efficiencies.
- Development (by governments) of a common language to facilitate a common understanding of key concepts, such as sustainability.
- Integrated, coherent, long-term strategy for responsible consumption and production.
- Efficiencies and increased well-being through shared services. Minimising costs through fewer interventions.

### **Goal 13 – Climate action**

**Key points from discussion:**

- Need funding and long-term partnerships to allow greater capacity building and appropriate funding mechanisms to support international action.
- Remains a funding issue – more investment required coupled with market-based mechanism that manages emissions. System of regulation and pricing – regulatory certainty is a key step to more efficient/available funding opportunities.
- Issue of visibility – climate pollution is currently 'free' and in many respects 'invisible', therefore difficult to convey tangible actions that are relatable to business, industry, consumers and community. This drives apathy in relating to issue and lack of understanding of how it relates to individuals.
- Lack of trust in institutions/government/business.
- Inadequate structures to manage the source for climate change/climate pollution (e.g. emissions trading mechanism).
- Need whole-of-government leadership that addresses policy uncertainty, takes a long-term view and effectively manages competing interests of peak bodies.

- Need to think beyond historic pathway on the back of mining and agriculture. As we move away from an economy based on agriculture and mining, how do we plan for that transition (i.e. new markets and jobs).
- Bridging of conflict of interests is required to support visionary and longer-term planning beyond 2030.
- There is inertia at all levels – political, corporate, and individual.
- Communication around evidence is a big challenge.
- Australia viewed as lacking a big picture/global view on climate change.
- Case studies and examples of tangible action can be helpful at both the project level as well as city, regional, national and international scales.
- Building codes and regulatory frameworks need to plan for the future.
- Goals present a useful framework to show interdependence of climate change with other aspects of sustainability and a catalyst for an enabling environment. They are a framework and opportunity to reframe the conversation on climate change.
- Integrate policy leadership and energy issues.
- Federal government facilitation, matchmaker for partnerships/finance.
- Need to look at integrating climate change action into all policies – link climate action to other policies/programs that have funding across all sectors.
- Need government direction and incentives, e.g. financial incentives (tax mechanism etc).
- Renewables now on the table for the first time because of rise in energy prices. Other financial instruments that can stimulate action – resilience bonds attached to green bonds.
- Need government and business to work together, but need policy frameworks and settings, e.g. tax incentives, but businesses can incentivise behaviour through pricing (e.g. insurance industry).
- Fix the distortion in the market – either regulate or put a price on pollution and remove subsidies. Not putting a price on pollution is a subsidy. Should get rid of all subsidies (i.e. on renewables but also on fossil fuels).
- Look at integrating financial implications at all tiers - employee level – KPIs. Divisional – profit to be made, will get priced into deals. Any form of financial implication will shape behaviour.
- Benefits from engagement include working for the common good, in the national interest: transition of economic, social, environmental opportunities.
- The Goals are a broad interlinked agenda that provides an opportunity to bring new/different stakeholders together.
- From a business perspective, action can generate clear revenue and customer base opportunity. Climate action has a true business driver.
- The more climate is seen and understood as a cross-cutting issue, the more potential for partnerships.
- The breakdown of communities is a pressing issue and challenge – responding to climate change on a local scale could help us rebuild sense of community.

- Opportunity to do something about adaptability and resilience across the Pacific and help ourselves as a community (building values and trust).
- Opportunity to learn from others in how they handle challenges (e.g. natural disasters) – we don't necessarily have the best technology/approaches to manage this.
- Need for innovative financing/financial products.
- Opportunity to transform to clean energy with customers at centre and targeted investment for renewable energy.
- Opportunity for new innovation, new economy, new investment and new job opportunities. Opportunity to change GDP model (away from coal) – what does new model of GDP growth look like?
- New investment opportunity – Australian banks are most innovative on green financial products, but not being leveraged enough by rest of the market. Opportunity to avoid losses and stranded assets.
- Need multidisciplinary/multilateral projects, research and partnerships.
- Opportunity to drive institutional change to take greater accountability for issues and change way of thinking. Institutions have been making the same points about insufficient leadership/politics on climate change for the last 15-20 years – shouldn't be seen as an excuse for inaction. Many institutions can undertake long-term planning outside of government policy setting.
- Opportunity for global benchmarking – allowing us to compare ourselves to others – and name and shaming– shame on companies engaged in certain activities.

### **Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

#### *Barriers:*

- Community trust and understanding of issues is still lacking – concern that we transitioned to a place of acceptance/apathy that climate change is happening.
- Policy uncertainty and the need for government and corporate leadership.
- Inertia at all tiers – political, corporate and consumer/community level.
  - Corporate inertia can be driven by inherent conservatism and by competing for deals in conflicting areas.
- Articulating the relevance of Goals to corporates that may not be clear on the relevance.
- Lack of integrated planning for climate management across all tiers
- Short-termism
- Lack of reliable, accurate data that can be used to assess impact – difficulty knowing impacts because of lack of good data and investment in data such as complex modelling
- Lack of education and consumer understanding of issues (e.g. Australia's energy system and costs of renewable energy) or how to take action
- Lack of mechanisms such as a regulatory system.
- Lack of public and private sector funding and funding mechanisms.

#### *Incentives:*

- Policy and government leadership.
- Stable policy framework.
- Financial incentives such as pricing carbon, growing the green bond market, greater access to consumer loans with concessional rates for green renovations, remove subsidies.
- Clear, long-term policy could drive change.
- Business certainty, competitive advantage, better financial returns, improved costs.
- Cheap, clean sustainable energy supply.
- Reputation incentive, national interest and common good.
- Partnerships for public and private climate finance.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Political opportunity for long-term strategy and vision.
- Economic opportunity for new industries, transition beyond current resource-base.
- Transformative possibilities - new jobs, investment opportunities, new markets, new structures.
- Risk reduction through avoided losses and stranded assets.
- Mainstreamed and integrated climate action across the Goals.
- Integrated partnership which leads to collective action.
- Development of a clean, modernised energy sector.
- Reconnecting community (build resilience and adaptivity).
- View nature and ecosystem services as a climate solution.
- Reporting frameworks - embed Goals into annual sustainability reporting – this will increasingly drive corporate decision-making. Industry groups globally starting to put everything under this framework – becoming common language or framework across companies.
- Better risk management with greater risk understanding as well as greater transparency and disclosure.
- Citizen science with technology literate citizens, community driven data.
- Competitive advantage for a business, driving community trust, attracting good talent, reducing risk (reputationally, operationally).
- Financial opportunities: new products, markets and mechanisms.
- Connecting the money and the action. Financing and how that money flows to where it needs to go.

## **Goal 14 – Life below water**

### **Key points from discussion:**

- Australia has a large capacity and role to play in indicator development on oceans issues.
- Use of data is important to help us understand oceans issues – new data and technologies are emerging that could be very useful.
- Need integrated oceans governance across sectors and to address siloing in management of oceans issues.
- Opportunities exist to build capacity on oceans issues across the Pacific.
- A key issue in this space will be looking at food security due to the reliance on oceans for key source of protein and increased demands for fisheries resources.
- Historically there has been a lack of interest from business to invest in ocean conservation.
- Need increased collaboration among sectors – oceans issues can tend to be harder to address than terrestrial issues but we need to learn from experience from addressing issues in other ecosystems.
- We need to recognise the value of tourism in relation to oceans and the associated (environmental, social and economic) benefits.
- There is rising momentum and interest in oceans issues and communities that are passionate about them – we need to tap into these people.
- The livelihoods of many Pacific Islands are dependent on oceans. We need to look at sharing our technical expertise (including legal and scientific) to support small island developing states.
- There are cross-branding opportunities in relation to this Goal – it is linked to health and climate, among others. We need to value the oceans in this regard.
- Another interesting avenue for discussion is tapping into marine energy.
- There is an absence of progress relating to blue bonds – these are hard to put together as a business model and it's hard to demonstrate return.
- Difficult to pinpoint what is most effective in building capacity to address oceans issues.
- Partnerships (including cross-sectoral partnerships) are key.
- Offsetting in the marine environment remains a challenge – there is no gold standard for offsetting.
- Blue economy – how to start looking at it and opportunities it provides.

### **Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

#### *Barriers:*

- Limited opportunities for business to invest in marine environment and difficult to show stable return on investment.
- Offsetting – there is no gold standard.
- Difficulty in knowing how best to effectively build capacity across our region.
- Increased demand for fisheries, impacting on food security.

*Incentives:*

- Cross-branding – links to SDG14.
- Blue economy – opportunities for countries.
- Clear business models – return for investment.
- Stable environment for investing – business, government, consumers.
- Requires show of stable return on investment; clear business models; stable environment for investing (from business, government and consumer point of view).

*Opportunities:*

- Partnerships.
- Financing to improve conservation.
- Data technologies – can understand more about oceans – drive improved indicators - we can understand far more about the oceans with new data and technologies. Note that Australia has large capacity in indicator development.
- Integrated ocean governance.
- Recognition of the situation in the Pacific (key issues of food security and security more broadly).

## Goal 15 – Life on Land

### Key points from discussion:

- There is a lack of understanding of the intrinsic as well as economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Most people don't change behaviour unless they view something affects them directly. Many are disconnected from nature and don't understand how important it is. This is a fundamental communication and education issue.
- Educating citizens about how they can engage has not been entirely successful. This Agenda provides momentum for education to improve understanding and inspire behavioural change. Educational apps which change behaviour could be useful.
- There has historically been a lack of political will, poor decision-making, fragmentation of policy, and poor/short-term planning that has impacted on progress. The rate of urgency in addressing biodiversity loss is increasing yet a rapid response is lacking.
- There has not been alignment of priorities and targets and there is a lack of regulation. Resource management often suffers from competing interest and conflict. Often rife with economic trade-offs.
- Lack of funding/ incentives – drip feed funding is insufficient. Funding must be targeted in a useful way – funding can be and is still being spent in the wrong way.
- Expanding population is placing growing pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems.
- A key issue is lack of knowledge, data and a systems-based approach at the national scale. There are growing data opportunities on a national scale which can help lead to open and transparent reporting and data platforms.
- Lack of integration is key. Prioritisation is critical also.
- Lack of networks supporting conservation.
- Not giving enough credibility to Indigenous management.
- Link with health and cultural values – the joy and love and nature – we can write about the economics but to hit home we need to look at health and nature, connecting nature in cities and to communities.
- Need to be wise when using terms like natural capital to ensure focus is not solely on commodification and monetisation but about all values. Compassion and respect are key values that needs to be brought into the conversation.
- Opportunities for cross sector partnerships, collaboration and hybrid partnerships are emerging from this space.
- Opportunities exist to align the national strategy with future environmental accounts and other national Goals and priorities. We should aim to use data to report at multiple scales.
- Don't separate intrinsic value of nature from monetary value.
- Fundamentally we need regulation otherwise we go backwards quite fast. Need to make regulation fashionable again - if you understand the public/private motivations you can go beyond regulation.



- There are a range of financial tools and market-based incentives – voluntary market for best practice (credits – market incentives)/ biobanking, offsets, tax incentives.
- Sustainable rural growth / national security / food security.
- Maintenance and conservation protects ecosystem service provision.
- There are also health, moral and community-based incentives from managing and conserving biodiversity.
- Reporting of status vs performance.
- Joy – having green/lovely places to live – health highlights. Messaging needs to be ‘Do it for yourself but also do it for others’. We need “collective” peer reward – communicating and supporting leaders – open recognition.

### **Summary of barriers, incentives and opportunities:**

#### *Barriers:*

- Funding.
- Knowledge and data.
- Lack of understanding/communication.
- Conflicts between users.
- Lack of political will, engagement, urgency around challenge, perceived barriers to population growth.

#### *Incentives:*

- Market-based instruments, regulation, quality of life, community partnerships and networks, national security, moral value, community networks, health.
- Incentives: finance and market-driven, regulation, quality of life, community partnerships and networks, national security/interest, moral value, connecting communities and creating good community networks, health.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Collaborations and partnerships – valuing life on land, connecting people.
- Big data opportunities on a national scale – open and transparent reporting.
- Better plans, strategies and regulation.
- Partnerships.
- Innovative research.
- Expand National Reserve System.
- Zero net carbon.
- Better technology to reduce impacts.
- Engagement in education, how we value life on land, deriving income, connecting people and nature.
- Data and tech in innovation.
- Connecting landscapes.

## **Comments from the floor**

1. *Importance of financing* - Financing was noted to be a common barrier to achieving the Goals. It was noted that a priority will be to find new ways to finance action from both the public and private sectors. It was raised that the private sector needs to be part of this conversation as it is clear government cannot finance this Agenda alone due to the amount required to achieve the Goals. It was raised that we need to understand public and private goods and where the benefits/costs lie in addressing an issue to determine the right mechanism for funding it. It was noted that the finance industry has a role to play in financing this Agenda. ANZ mentioned they have a relatively new sustainable finance team which is focusing on green bonds and projects in the green buildings and renewable energy space.

2. *Consumer choice* - The role of consumer choice was raised and the role of corporates in supplying products that are more sustainable to begin with. It was noted there is no shortage of consumers willing to make a sustainable choice but often the opportunity to make sustainable choices are not present or obvious. Qantas mentioned they are looking further into identifying consumer wants and needs in terms of sustainable consumption.

3. *Investment in the Pacific* - Access to finance and investment in the Pacific (small island developing states) from both the public and private sector was raised. It was mentioned that it was often difficult for private companies to invest in the region and whether some ways to overcome these barriers could be explored.

4. *Youth engagement* - The role of young Australians in this Agenda was raised. The [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#) and the [Australia/Pacific Regional Network of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#) were highlighted as useful mechanism for outreach on the Goals – in particular they can connect to over 500 universities across the world. The Australia/Pacific Regional Network brings together SDSN members in the region to develop and promote solutions, policies and public education for sustainable development. They have also recently developed a new [guide to help Universities accelerate action on the SDGs](#). This provides practical guidance on how Universities can accelerate their contributions and play a key role in education on the Goals.

It was mentioned that Questacon has played a key role in supporting the development of the [Young Australians' Plan for the Planet](#) program. This program was established in Australia to promote the Goals and a sustainable development plan for Australia to 2030 through 20 schools across Australia. It was reiterated that involving young people in opportunities to discuss the Goals is important.

## **Session 3: Advancing the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals**

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This session comprised of two Panel discussions – one on Innovation and the other on Partnerships.

### **Innovative ways to advance the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals**

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This Panel was facilitated by Peter Cochrane, Regional Councillor, International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Each Panellist had 5 minutes to present on their views and experience on innovation in the context of the Goals.

Panellists:

- **Dr Adam Lewis, Branch Head, National Earth & Marine Observations, Geoscience Australia** - Government representative
- **Kelly O'Shanassy, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation** - Non-Government representative
- **Professor Saul Cunningham, Director, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University** - Academic representative
- **Geoff Scott, Executive Director, Strategic Resource Management, NSW Aboriginal Land Council** - Indigenous representative (unable to attend on the day)
- **Sasha Courville, Head of Corporate Responsibility Strategy, National Australia Bank** - Business representative

#### **Dr Adam Lewis, Branch Head, National Earth & Marine Observations, Geoscience Australia**

Dr Lewis gave an overview of the Data Cube, which is a world-leading data analysis system for satellite and other Earth observation data developed by Geoscience Australia in partnership with the CSIRO and the National Computational Infrastructure (NCI) at the Australian National University.

He gave the example of the 'Water Observations from Space' data which can link stream flow level to where floods are going to go, show where a beach is eroding, and support development by showing water lows and areas where not to build. He explained that the Data Cube has enabled users to analyse 15 years of data across the country at a regional scale. This data can be produced on an ongoing basis, enabling the production of

updated information as new data becomes available, and enabling researchers to interact with the data iteratively to improve quality and try new ideas.

Dr Lewis advised that the volume and diversity of satellite and other Earth observation data has increased exponentially over the last 30 to 40 years, and until recently this presented significant technical barriers to realising its full potential. The Data Cube is an innovative approach to organising and analysing data, making it quicker and easier to provide information to decision makers in fields such as agriculture, natural resource management and community safety. This Australian innovation is now influencing how the world looks at and uses satellite data. The Data Cube has been developed using Open Source technology and freely available data to make it possible for other governments to easily adapt and implement their own versions of the Data Cube. For more information about the Data Cube, please visit: <https://www.opendatacube.org/>

**Kelly O'Shanassy, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation**

Ms O'Shanassy provided an overview of innovation from ACF's perspective – it needs to be smart, it needs to reduce the impact on the environment and it needs to focus on big systems change. Energy is the space where this transition could really make an impact – innovation in this space may feel uncomfortable but it needs to happen to shift Australia to a clean energy future.

Ms O'Shanassy advised that the ACF's next big campaign is to look at environment laws – those that are there to protect our air, wildlife and land. At times short-term gain prevails regardless of the law. We need to innovate around these laws to enable greater protection of Australia's natural places – to protect our water supply, wildlife habitat, our native parks and forests that play a vital role in balancing our climate. She mentioned that our ecosystems are now less healthy than in 1992 at the time of the original Rio Earth Summit.

Ms O'Shanassy mentioned that the ACF are working on big systems change – not just looking at national park by national park. They are looking to innovate around the economy and in developing opportunities for clean jobs. She raised the point of innovation around democracy following low levels of support for government - people are looking for something different, the community is more engaged on the issues and we have seen a boom in interest in environment issues and participation in civil society groups as people want to get involved and make a difference. She noted that significant number of people are interested in clean energy.

She stated that now is the time to be ambitious and imaginative with our innovation – need to think without dwelling on the barriers and trade-offs. She noted that it only takes a small percentage of the population to make

significant change happen. Her final point was that we need to think big and partner with others.

**Professor Saul Cunningham, Director, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University**

Professor Cunningham outlined the approach on innovation taken by the Fenner School, which is targeting problem solving through interdisciplinary research. He stated that environment problems have always been interdisciplinary which is why it is important to have those focusing on biophysical issues working alongside people who are economists, social scientists and policy experts etc. He also acknowledged that it is important to remember that while progress on one Goal may lead to progress on others, this can also work perversely, whereby progress on one may cause unintended harm on another. This is part of the reason why taking an interdisciplinary approach is so important.

Professor Cunningham stated we need to think at a systems-level and look at how we address issues such as food security in a sustainable way so it doesn't have perverse impacts on biodiversity.

He acknowledged that Australians are generally considered to be world leading in knowledge on environment and agriculture issues – we have influence beyond what we might expect, but that we need to remember that the Australian environment is quite different (and therefore our experience is different) to that of Europe and the Americas. We have the potential to be leaders on indigenous knowledge and culture.

He mentioned that often innovation is associated with a commercial return, but that in the case of the SDGs, there may not be a commercial outcome as it may be in the public good. He also advised that sometimes solid, old fashioned science can provide the answers we are looking for. He raised the topic of incentives for innovation and the need to reward innovation and researchers to encourage them to work in these areas. His final points were that we need to take a long-term view – we need to educate students coming through academic institutions to think with a long-term view and to inspire and excite them to find solutions rather than grind them down with doom and gloom.

**Sasha Courville, Head of Corporate Responsibility Strategy, National Australia Bank**

Ms Courville opened by explaining her role as Head of Social Innovation at the NAB. This includes strategy development and coordination of Shared Value and Corporate Responsibility Initiatives, stakeholder engagement on environmental, social and governance issues, best practice non-financial performance and reporting and coordination of NAB's response on key societal issues across the enterprise.

She noted that innovation comes out of agility – and that making the transition to a more agile way of thinking is hard. She spoke of the importance of collaboration and ecosystem thinking, joining all the dots together to address issues in an integrated way, working across sectors, separating out environment from economic decision-making processes. In cases where the data sets are siloed and the solution lies in bringing them together, we must cut across the silos.

She noted one of the most important things about generating cultural and social change is breaking it down into bite-sized pieces. She provided an overview of NAB's involvement in finding innovative ways to finance projects through green bonds. In 2014, NAB launched Australia's first Climate Bond which raised \$300 million for renewable energy facilities. This was the first time an Australian issuer has brought a green bond to the local market. They then applied this learning to government to launch the Victorian Government Green Bonds in 2016 to help to finance and refinance Victorian State investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, low carbon public transport and energy efficient water treatment.

In 2017, NAB issued Australia's first Sustainability Bond for the Australian Catholic University (ACU). The bond will fund projects related to green buildings, and research and development programs with social impact. NAB arranged the AUD200 million bond for ACU. Ms Courville acknowledged that the process of developing these bonds has been a learning experience from which they can now leverage off.

Her final points were to reiterate the importance of seeking customer insights to ensure people are put at the heart of these issues and to collaborate. She noted that there is a huge appetite to invest in the Goals so we need to work out how we leverage this.

***Comments from the floor***

1. *Areas of strength in Australian innovation* - The Panel was asked to identify areas of strength in Australian innovation. The Panel agreed we excel in soft skills (technical knowledge and expertise) - we have strengths in environmental management regarding water, land degradation, spatial

data. We are often effective and valuable contributors of knowledge and expertise on committees and expert groups. While Australia may not always have the budget to support global action, we often bring knowledge and experience to the table.

The Panel also noted that we still have a long way to go in protecting and managing our biodiversity. They noted Australia is one of only 17 countries considered as megadiverse – this means we are one of a few countries that harbor the majority of Earth's biodiversity. We are often still influenced by European culture in the way we deal with biodiversity issues. We have great potential to be a world leader in biodiversity science, management and conservation but there is frequently a gap between science and policy and/or government leadership.

A key challenge in innovation was noted by the Panel to be ongoing silos – we need to move past silos in the way we operate, show leadership and collaborate for collective impact, unleash a community response and work towards a common vision.

The Panel noted that Australia does systems-level thinking and future planning well, and this is what must happen for the Goals – we need to visualise the way forward, have a plan and someone accountable for that plan. The Panel quoted Lewis Carroll 'If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there' to highlight this point. The Murray Darling reform was raised as an example of a challenging issue that we have managed to work collectively and collaboratively on to address.

*2. Leadership and innovation* – a comment was made from the floor that we need strong leadership on the Goals, along with some clear priorities of what we are going to focus on and are aiming to achieve. It was noted that businesses are very good at prioritising issues, and perhaps we can learn from that experience. The Panel noted the putting forward a few priorities may be a good way forward, but that it is very difficult to separate these Goals – they are all interlinked and are all there because they are priorities. Instead we need to look at linkages, interrelationships and dependencies between them. It was noted that while there are currently questions about resources there will be different resources available at different times to address these issues, and that we don't necessarily need to have the answers or a perfect product - it should be about making progress.

*3. Community engagement* – the point was raised about the role of consumers and the community in driving change. The impact of people's values on what they buy was mentioned, as was the importance of empowering people to make good choices and using a values-based approach. It was noted that ensuring the rhetoric around environmental messaging reflects values based on a shared concern for the environment is important – it was noted that the current rhetoric around ecosystem services

and natural capital has connotations associated with consumption and economic value which doesn't necessarily appeal to the community. It was noted that we ultimately need to embed the value of the environment in a way that appeals to communities and using a common language across sectors (corporates, NGOs, civil society groups) to grow the understanding that this is not someone else's problem and that we all have a role to play. A comment from business was that most environmentally conscientious businesses would welcome a citizen base that cares and who want to be active from an environmental values perspective.



## **Building Partnerships for Sustainable Development**

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Facilitator: Sean Sullivan, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Australian Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature

This session was comprised of three case studies, each totalling 10 minutes.

Case studies:

1. **The Nature Conservancy and Google: machine learning to tackle poverty and sustain life below water** – presented by Rich Gilmore, Country Director, The Nature Conservancy & Shannon Rootsey, Senior Account Manager, Google
2. **Future Planet Partnership** – presented by Megan Flynn, Manager of Environment and Carbon Strategy, Qantas Group & Anna Stewart, Head of Corporate Sustainability, ANZ
3. **Australian Business and Biodiversity Initiative** – presented by Andrew Petersen, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Business Australia; Tia Stevens, Director, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy & Cassandra Nichols, Chief Executive Officer, Earthwatch Institute

Mr Sullivan opened the session by acknowledging that while partnerships can take a bit more work, they often result in greater rewards and broader benefits. He noted that in the context of the Goals, partnerships are vital as Public money is insufficient to support the action that is required to achieve this Agenda. He noted the importance of innovative financing and identifying creative ways to use the resources we've got to achieve maximum impact and make change.

### **Case study 1: The Nature Conservancy and Google: machine learning to tackle poverty and sustain life below water**

For The Nature Conservancy, the Goals are a core part of their new sustainability agenda. They have five key priority areas - action on climate, healthy cities, food and water, biodiversity, reconnecting people and nature. They invest around \$1bn a year but are now looking at who they need to partner with to progress outcomes on some of these issues. They are looking for significant and unusual partnerships and recognise that they need to direct resources in the most targeted way possible.

The Nature Conservancy's partnership with Google commenced in 2015 when they applied for and won the 2016 Google Impact Challenge: Australia. Their project was to look at ways to address unsustainable fishing practices, in particular addressing data gap in fisheries information. With

funding from Google and a technical partnership in place, a program called FishFace has been developed to improve data relating to global fish stocks.

FishFace uses facial recognition technology to identify fish and automate the collation of information on the species and numbers of fish caught. Through FishFace, The Nature Conservancy hopes to make a massive positive difference for global fisheries by collecting, organising, sharing and utilising the data essential for sustainable fisheries management. It will reduce overfishing and sustain the livelihoods of coastal communities worldwide.

Google has a charity arm that supports not-for-profit innovators and is particularly keen on new ideas and partnerships linked to technology – technology and innovation are at the core of Google's business model. Google will continue with the Google Impact Challenge in the future, with a minimum funding commitment of \$5 million, inviting charities and non-profits to propose technology-driven solutions to challenges facing our society.

### **Case study 2: Future Planet Partnership**

Qantas has been an active supporter of partnerships, particularly those that support economy-wide solutions. Qantas recognises there is value in partnerships being able to drive perspectives beyond their own business operations. Partnerships are important tools to mobilise sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources and can lead to enhanced coherence on sustainable development.

The Qantas Future Planet Partnership is a partnership that raises collective ambition on sustainability. It is founded on offsetting emissions. Since 2007 Qantas Future Planet has offset over 2.5 million tonnes of carbon emissions. This has been achieved by customers choosing to offset the emissions from their flights. 100 per cent of this contribution then goes towards verified carbon offset projects.

Qantas and ANZ have had a corporate partnership for some time but are now partnering to drive leadership and impact around the SDGs. ANZ has had a sustainability framework for quite some time and has undertaken work to link relevant Goals to its strategy. ANZ is focussed on sustainable growth, identifying and managing the social and environmental risks associated with their business lending decisions.

ANZ and Qantas are looking at who they can partner with in the corporate space. It is more common for cross sector partnerships to develop rather than partnerships within sectors, but they are also hoping to encourage greater collaboration within sectors.

Further work between Qantas and ANZ will look at more collective action to raise companies' commitments relating to sustainability. They want to move beyond unilateral and bilateral action and want to bring together businesses

to develop a long-term plan to raise commitment collaboratively. They want to move from mapping Goals to more of a comprehensive plan with a methodology to raise ambition around the Goals. One of the first outputs they are looking to produce will be a guidance document that can be used by businesses to drive action on the SDGs, which can then feed into government reporting on what Australia is contributing to the global agenda. They noted that partnership is vital as business recognises that government can't meet this Agenda on its own.

### **Case study 3: Australian Business and Biodiversity Initiative**

The Australian Business and Biodiversity Initiative (ABBI) is an Australian alliance of organisations and individuals from business, government, academia and the community committed to integrating biodiversity and sustainability into their policies and practices.

The ABBI's mission is (1) to raise awareness and improve the understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem services loss and degradation as a critical risk, and (2) to recognise the opportunity for Australian businesses to support the development of practical solutions that integrate consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into business decision-making and ultimately improve the health and resilience of the environment and the economy.

It is an open, free and inclusive initiative to foster collaboration across all sectors focused on reducing adverse impacts on, or to contribute to a net positive benefit for, Australia's biodiversity. Its aims are to lead change, build connections, create capacity, and support and drive innovation.

ABBI fits into the international context through the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity is an initiative under the Convention that encourages the establishment of national business and biodiversity forums to facilitate engagement with business. ABBI is the Australian arm of this global initiative – formally recognised in October 2014. It is built on the understanding that governments, business, not for profits and civil society must work together for global success.

ABBI is actively building and maintaining relationships and partnerships with a broader range of stakeholders, sharing diverse experiences to solve shared problems - getting everyone in the same room is one of the great strengths of the ABBI.

The Australian Government engages and supports ABBI because we recognise despite significant investments, governments alone cannot ensure the maintenance and security of natural capital – these are complex natural assets that require stewardship all sectors. ABBI conducts a range of capacity building and information sharing activities to assist members come together, discuss and generate products. Collaborating to determine how best to

tackle the issue increases the chance of success by directing efforts and framing collective thinking.

ABBI provides a platform to really build connections across sectors and facilitates a safe place where participants can come together and co-create ideas and projects that will safeguard our future.

Two examples of partnerships were mentioned:

1. Bush Blitz – which involves the Australian Government, BHP, Earthwatch Australia. This program has been running for 8 years and is focussed on mapping and recording Australia's plants and animals. To date has found over 1000 new species. It brings together science, education and community engagement, which leads to improved management of Australia's species (plants and animals alike).

2. Murray-Darling Basin Balanced Water Fund - The Nature Conservancy Australia established the Murray-Darling Basin Balanced Water Fund to provide water security for Australian farming families while protecting culturally significant wetlands that support threatened species.

The Natural Capital Protocol was mentioned, which is a framework designed to help generate information for business managers to inform decisions. It was noted that the Natural Capital Protocol has developed Sector Guides for the Apparel and Food and Beverage Sectors, and that a Supplement is currently out for consultation to assist the Finance Sector. Consultations on the development of an Oceans Supplement have also commenced.

Forum participants were encouraged to join the ABBI – there is no cost, and participants will receive regular newsletter, notice about events. It is a useful network to share information across multiple avenues – through websites, regular newsletters – events, workshops, business stream engagement, etc. Further details on the ABBI can be found here: <http://www.sbaarchive.net/i-abbi.asp>

## Summary

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Dr Rachel Bacon from the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy facilitated the summary of the Forum. She noted the high level of engagement and shared enthusiasm of participants as well as the value of the combined intellectual capital in generating productive discussion. She noted there was strong recognition of the importance of this Agenda and was encouraged to see the shared interest in collaboration and partnerships.

She highlighted collaborative opportunities that could be explored around financing, data, citizen/customer engagement and education. She reiterated the importance of looking at the interlinkages between the Goals and developing initiatives that can deliver on multiple objectives. She acknowledged that as the Agenda progress, we may not always have a happy story to tell, but that collaboration would be the key to success.

The Chairs of each session were asked to reflect on the Forum proceedings.

Peter Cochrane reflected on the community groundswell and momentum for change, and the importance of youth in supporting the Agenda and Goals. He noted that a key message from the day was the need to go further with data, knowledge and technology to get to the crux of issues and understand where we need to go in the future. He said it was clear that we need to address some of these issues urgently. As an example, he mentioned biodiversity loss is a significant, pressing issue that remains a large challenge and stated it is clear that we really need to focus on addressing areas where we know we aren't performing well.

Julian Crawford reflected on the concept of the tragedy of the commons and questioned how we can move towards understanding, analysing and resolving these large-scale resource management problems. He raised the point that a key issue that was not directly addressed was peak population and the implications caused by it – what this will mean for the world's environment and resources, and also questioned who in the room would be around to see it, leading to the point that we needed 'big' and long-term vision.

Alice Cope reflected that we now need to move beyond talking and actually start taking action. She noted that there are some great opportunities and examples of partnerships, such as that mentioned between Qantas and ANZ. She raised the point that we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, and reiterated that we need to tap into the opportunities and start making progress, noting that the Goals provide the platform for us to work together.



## Summary of questionnaire response

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Participants were asked on the day to fill out a short questionnaire that asked them to list the top three highest priority Goals for their organisation, the top three barriers to pursuing these priority Goals and the top 3 opportunities for their organisation in relation to the Goals.

The survey showed the top five highest priority Goals for the organisations in the room were:

1. Goal 13 – Climate action
2. Goal 15 – Life on land
3. Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
4. Goal 14 – Life below water
5. Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production

The most common barriers to pursuing the Goals were:

- Policy uncertainty (i.e. lack of a clear whole-of-government approach and national framework).
- Addressing competing priorities (e.g. in business).
- Moving beyond mapping links to measuring impacts.
- Reporting meaningfully against targets and the resources to do so.
- Generating cultural change from 'traditional' approaches.

The most common opportunities for their organisation in relation to the Goals were:

- Elevating ambition through cross-sectoral partnerships.
- Competitive advantage via differentiation.
- Driving improved reporting on impact.
- Linking local actions to national and international Goals.
- Leveraging Australian expertise to developing economies.
- Continuing to drive innovation (e.g. in energy generation & climate change mitigation).
- Providing case studies to facilitate new projects.

## Closing remarks

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Dr Rachel Bacon outlined that the priority for the Australian Government is to deliver Australia's first Voluntary National Review on the 2030 Agenda which will be submitted to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2018. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet are coordinating this. The Review provides an opportunity to highlight Australia's achievements, priorities and challenges – both domestically and internationally. She noted that as work on our Review progresses, we will have a clearer idea of our areas of success as well as areas requiring further action.

She invited participants to submit case studies to the Department of the Environment and Energy of work underway in Australia to support the environment and energy Goals. These are to be compiled into an annually produced compendium and would be useful for a range of outputs including Australia's Voluntary National Review, as well as other national reporting requirements. She advised that details for submission of case studies could be found on our Departmental webpage at the following link:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/about-us/international/2030-Agenda>

She also highlighted that partnerships are key focus for the Department of the Environment and Energy and that our Partnerships area were very keen to explore opportunities and ideas for environmentally-related partnerships. It was also highlighted that the United Nations has a register for partnerships on the Goals that participants may wish to consider:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/register>



## Appendix 1: Agenda

<b>Introducing the Sustainable Development Goals</b>	
<i>Facilitator: Dr Rachel Bacon, First Assistant Secretary, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy</i>	
8:30-8:50	<b>Registration</b> (tea and coffee)
8:50-9:00	<b>Welcome to Country</b>  <i>Speaker: Uncle Allen Madden, Gadigal Elder</i>
9:00-9:15	<b>Welcome from the Co-Chairs</b>  <i>Speakers:</i>  <i>1. Dr David Gruen, G20 Sherpa, Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet</i>  <i>2. Peter Cochrane, Regional Councillor, International Union for Conservation of Nature</i>
9:15-9:30	<b>State of Play on the Sustainable Development Goals</b>  <i>Speaker: Natasha Smith, First Assistant Secretary, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australian Government arrangements on the SDGs including the Voluntary National Review</li> <li>Update from the 2017 High-Level Political Forum, 10-19 July 2017, New York</li> </ul>
9:30-9:45	<b>Business and industry engagement on the Sustainable Development Goals</b>  <i>Speaker: Alice Cope, Executive Director, Global Compact Network Australia</i>
9:45-10:00	<b>Environmental non-government organisations and the Sustainable Development Goals</b>  <i>Speaker: Dermot O'Gorman, Chief Executive Officer, WWF-Australia</i>
<i>Intended outcome: Generate understanding of cross-sector engagement on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and how this fits into the global picture.</i>	

## Session 1: Understanding the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals

Facilitator: Julian Crawford, Director, Ecosteps

10:00-10:45	<p><b>Panel 1: Health, water and sanitation, clean energy and sustainable cities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal 3 - Good health and well-being - <i>Nina Cullen, Executive Director Biodiversity, Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water &amp; Planning</i></li> <li>• Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation - <i>Professor Rob Skinner, Chief Executive Officer, Monash Water for Liveability</i></li> <li>• Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy - <i>Victoria Adams, Director, Clean Energy Finance Corporation</i></li> <li>• Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities - <i>Andrew Cole, Regional Sustainability Manager, Lendlease</i></li> </ul>
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10:45 – 11:00 Morning tea

11:00-11:45	<p><b>Panel 2: Responsible consumption and production, climate action, and marine and terrestrial conservation.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production - <i>Dr Kate Ringvall, Country Manager Sustainability Retail, IKEA</i></li> <li>• Goal 13 - Climate action - <i>Christopher Lee, Chief Executive Officer, Climate-KIC Australia Ltd</i></li> <li>• Goal 14 - Life below water - <i>Nic Bax, Director, Marine Biodiversity Hub, University of Tasmania</i></li> <li>• Goal 15 - Life on land - <i>Jane Hutchinson, Chief Executive Officer, Tasmanian Land Conservancy</i></li> </ul>
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*Intended outcome: Generate understanding of each of the environment and energy SDGs, how they intersect and what types of initiatives are happening in this space.*

## Session 2: Exploring the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals – barriers, incentives and opportunities

Facilitator: Alice Cope, Executive Director, Global Compact Network Australia

11:45-12:30	<p><b>Round 1: Breakout groups to discuss the barriers, incentives and opportunities for each of the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals</b></p>
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12:30 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15-2:00	<b>Round 2: Breakout groups to discuss the barriers, incentives and opportunities for each of the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals</b>
2:00-2:30	<b>Summary of breakout discussions</b>  <i>2-3 min report back on each SDG</i>
<i>Intended outcome: Provide a platform for participants to discuss their experiences with barriers, incentives and opportunities for the environment and energy SDGs. This is also an opportunity to identify interlinkages and multiple benefits across SDGs.</i>	

### **Session 3: Advancing the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals**

2:30-3:30	<b>Innovative ways to advance the environment and energy Sustainable Development Goals</b>  <i>Facilitator: Peter Cochrane, Regional Councillor, International Union for Conservation of Nature</i>  <i>Panellists:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government representative – Dr Adam Lewis, Branch Head, National Earth &amp; Marine Observations, Geoscience Australia</li> <li>• Non-Government representative – Kelly O'Shanassy, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation</li> <li>• Academic representative – Professor Saul Cunningham, Director, Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University</li> <li>• Indigenous representative – Geoff Scott, Executive Director, Strategic Resource Management, NSW Aboriginal Land Council</li> <li>• Business representative – Sasha Courville, Head of Corporate Responsibility Strategy, National Australia Bank</li> </ul>
<i>Intended outcome: Opportunity to showcase innovative work underway on the environment and energy SDGs.</i>	

3:30 – 3:45 Afternoon tea

3:45-4:30	<p><b>Building Partnerships for Sustainable Development</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator: Sean Sullivan, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Australian Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature</i></p> <p><i>Case studies:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>4. The Nature Conservancy and Google: machine learning to tackle poverty and sustain life below water</b> – presented by Rich Gilmore, Country Director, The Nature Conservancy &amp; Shannon Rootsey, Senior Account Manager, Google</li> <li><b>5. Future Planet Partnership</b> – presented by Megan Flynn, Manager of Environment and Carbon Strategy, Qantas Group &amp; Anna Stewart, Head of Corporate Sustainability, ANZ</li> <li><b>6. Australian Business and Biodiversity Initiative</b> – presented by Andrew Petersen, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Business Australia; Tia Stevens, Director, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy &amp; Cassandra Nichols, Chief Executive Officer, Earthwatch Institute</li> </ol>
<p><i>Intended outcome: Understand the mechanisms and platforms available to pursue partnerships and cross-sector collaboration on the SDGs as well as hear examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships in action.</i></p>	
4:30-5:00	<p><b>Key insights and final discussion from the Forum</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator: Dr Rachel Bacon, First Assistant Secretary, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy</i></p>
5:00	<b>Forum close</b>

## Appendix 2: List of organisations in attendance

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AGL Energy	ANZ
Arup	Aurecon
Australian Committee for IUCN	Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Ethical Investment	Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	Australian National University
Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute	CAER (Centre for Australian Ethical Research)
Centre for Policy Development	Clean Energy Finance Corporation
Climate Policy Watch	Climate-KIC Australia
ClimateWorks Australia	Commonwealth Bank of Australia
CSIRO	Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, SA
Department of Health and Human Services, Vic	Architectural Historian & Heritage Consultant
Earthwatch Institute (Australia)	Environmental Defenders Office NSW
Green Building Council of Australia	Geoscience Australia
Global Compact Network Australia	Google
Insurance Australia Group	IKEA Australia
Impact Investing Australia	Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia
International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Lend-Lease Australia	Melbourne Water
Monash Sustainable Development Institute	Monash Water for Liveability
National Australia Bank	New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
NRM Regions Australia	Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW
Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Victoria	Optus

Parks Victoria	PwC
Qantas	Questacon - National Science and Technology Centre
Re.Group	Solaris Paper
Sustainable Business Australia	Tangaroa Blue Foundation
Tasmanian Land Conservancy	The Nature Conservancy
United Nations Association of Australia	Unilever
University of New South Wales	University of Tasmania – Marine Biodiversity Hub
University of Western Sydney	VicHealth
Water Services Association of Australia	Wet Tropics Management Authority
Woodside Energy	World Vision Australia
WWF-Australia	Yarra Valley Water
Zoos Victoria	