



THREATENED SPECIES STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES FROM PUBLIC
CONSULTATIONS-JULY 2021

CONSULTANT REPORT

August 2021

**EcoFutures**



EcoFutures recognises and acknowledges the unique relationship and deep connection to Country shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as First Peoples and Traditional Owners of Australia. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.

Artwork by Vicki Golding. This piece was commissioned by Alluvium Group and has told our story of water across Country, from catchment to coast, with people from all cultures learning, understanding, sharing stories, walking to and talking at the meeting places as one nation.

This report has been prepared by EcoFutures Consulting/Alluvium Pty Ltd for Office of the Threatened Species Commission (OTSC) under the contract titled 'Threatened Species Strategy – Action Plan consultation support'.

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1 Introduction

The first Action Plan under the Australian Government's new Threatened Species Strategy will be in place from 2021 to 2026. The Action Plan will:

- Identify priority species and places
- Outline specific actions to improve the trajectory and condition of species and places
- Set targets to measure progress.

In July 2021, the Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner (OTSC) sought public feedback on the actions and targets to be included in this first Action Plan, and to find out more about what species and places are important to people.

The OTSC contracted EcoFutures / Alluvium to provide support in the planning and implementation of a robust and timely consultation process to support development of this first Action Plan.

The project involved:

- Refining survey questions for inclusion in a public survey. The survey was posted on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's "Have Your Say" consultation web page. A copy of the survey has been included in Appendix A.
- Analyse responses to the survey and written submissions in response to eight (8) action areas.
- Support the preparation, logistics and running of nine workshops with key stakeholders.
- Summarise the outcomes of the public consultation process in a written report, including details of the survey and workshops as well as analysis, synthesis, and integration of consultation outputs.

1.1 About this report

This report summarises the outcomes and analysis of the public comments received on the Threatened Species Action Plan 2021 - 2026: consultation paper (as described above). EcoFutures/Alluvium conducted a robust thematic content analysis of the feedback received to understand:

- Who responded to the public consultation process?
- What was the number and nature of submissions?
- What were the overall key themes raised?

The report is divided into two sections:

1. Response overview
2. Detailed responses by Action Area



Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan 2021 – 2026:

Figure 1: Cover image from consultation paper

2 Consultation overview

All Australians were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the Action Plan through the Department's 'Have Your Say' platform. The survey was open from the 9 July 2021 to the 26 July 2021. Respondents were asked to read the consultation paper and provide feedback via a survey (see Appendix A) or to upload a written submission. Answering every question under every Section was not required. Respondents were encouraged to answer only questions related to the sections of most interest.

2.1 Engagement and traffic sources

The 'Have Your Say' platform recorded data on the page views, number of visitors/visits and new registrations across the consultation period. There was a total of 2,079 page views from 836 visits (Figure 2). Of these, 680 participants visited at least one page of the site, while 308 visited multiple pages. While 77 participants completed the survey, the 'Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan 2021-2026 Consultation Paper' was downloaded and/or viewed 337 times.

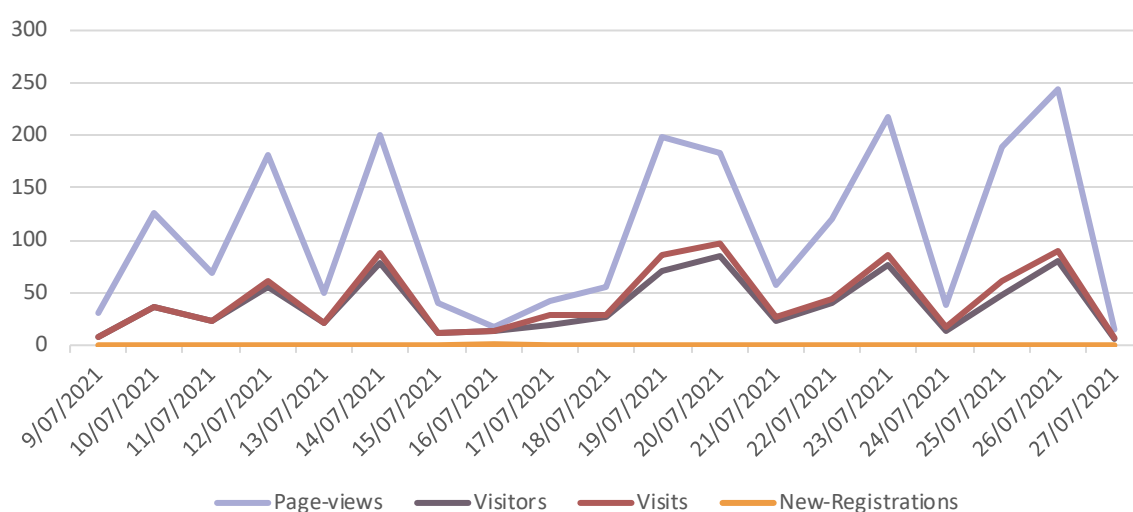


Figure 2: Number of page views and visitors over the 'Have Your Say' consultation period

The majority of visits (n = 497) to the 'Have Your Say' platform originated directly from the platform link. The next most common traffic source was Facebook, which was the source of 133 visits over the consultation period, followed by '.GOV' sites (n = 120) and google (n = 47) (Figure 3).

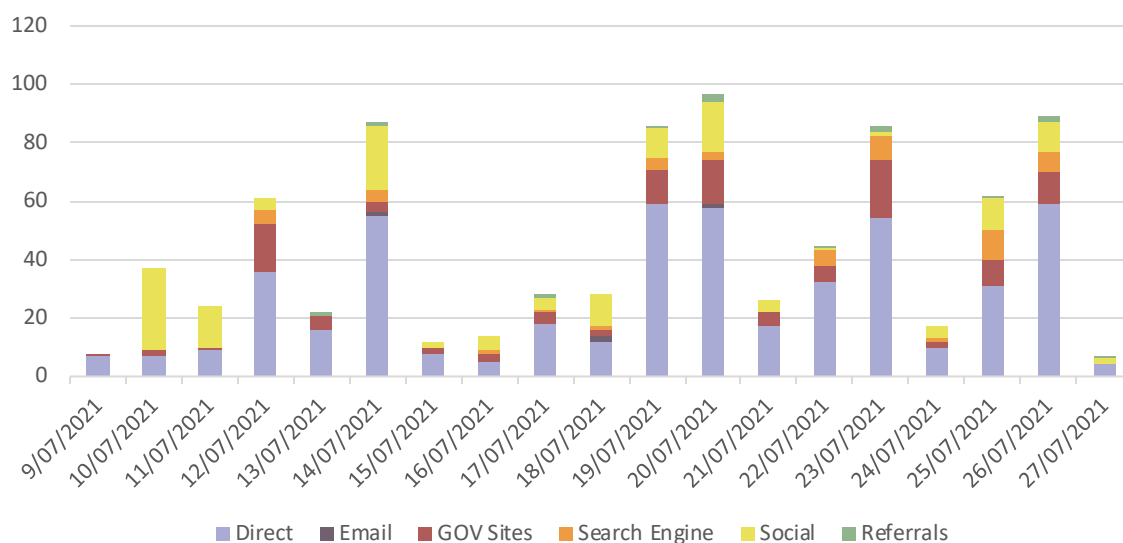


Figure 3: Traffic source for 'Have Your Say' platform over the consultation period

2.2 Who responded?

A total of 25 written submissions were received via the 'Have Your Say' platform. A one-week extension was granted at the request of the respondents to accommodate ten additional submissions that were emailed directly to the OTSC Team. In addition to these submissions, 52 respondents completed the survey questions on the platform. Nine workshops were held between 13 July 2021 and 28 July 2021 with 147 participants. Figure 4 indicates the respondent type and quantity.

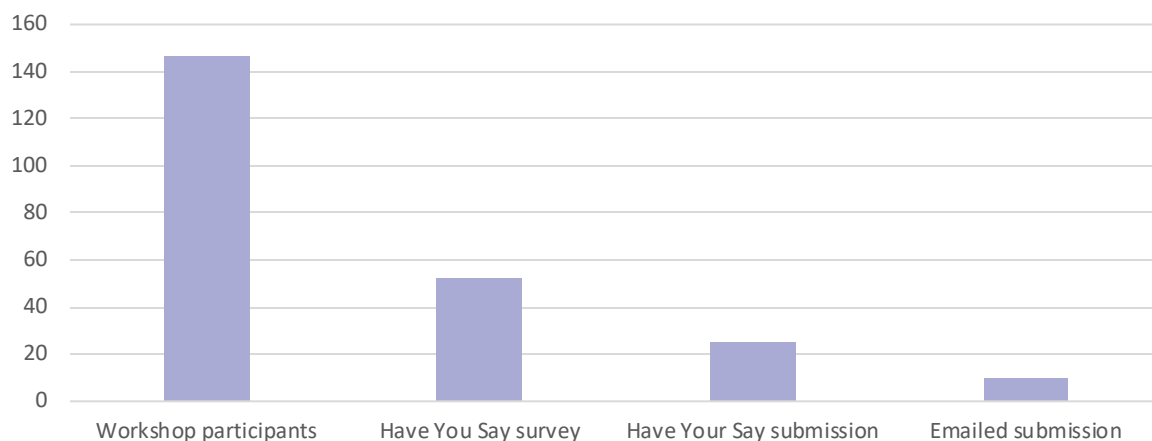


Figure 4: Total responses by type (n = 234)

The largest proportion of responses were workshop participants (63%), followed by survey responses (22%). The third most common response was a submission via the 'Have Your Say' platform (11%), followed by a written submission (4%).

The nine workshops engaged a total of 147 participants. Across all nine workshops 1,450 comments were posted on the online 'Mural' interface (Figure 5). These were then downloaded and analysed.

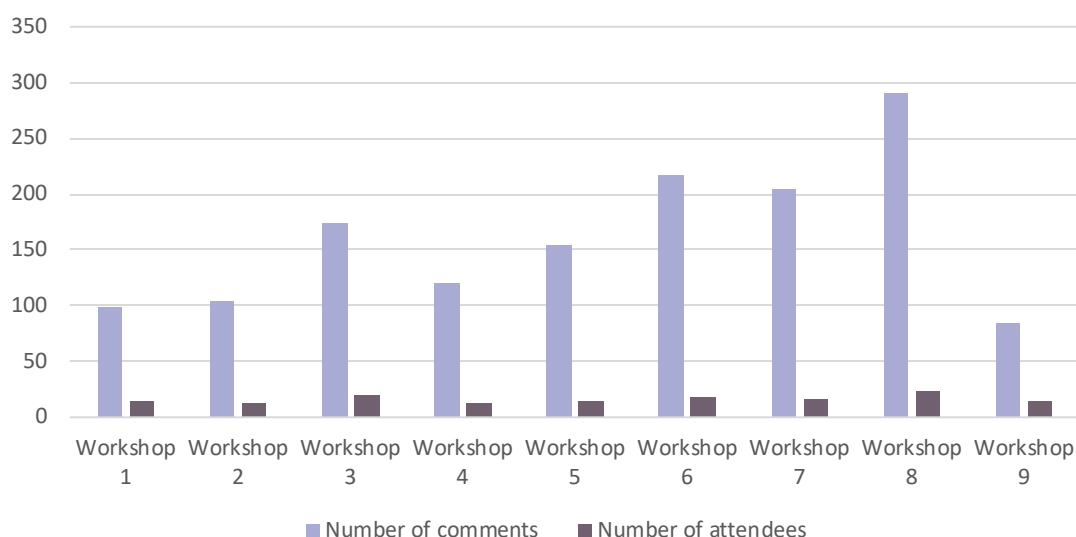


Figure 5: Number of workshop comments (n = 1,450) and attendees (n = 147)

Regarding **group categories**, survey/'Have Your Say' submission participants were able to nominate which group they identified with from a list of provided categories. The largest proportion of responses were identified as coming from the *Private Citizen* category (51%), followed by submissions from either a *Non-Government Organisation* (33%) or *Local or State Government* (5%) (Figure 6).

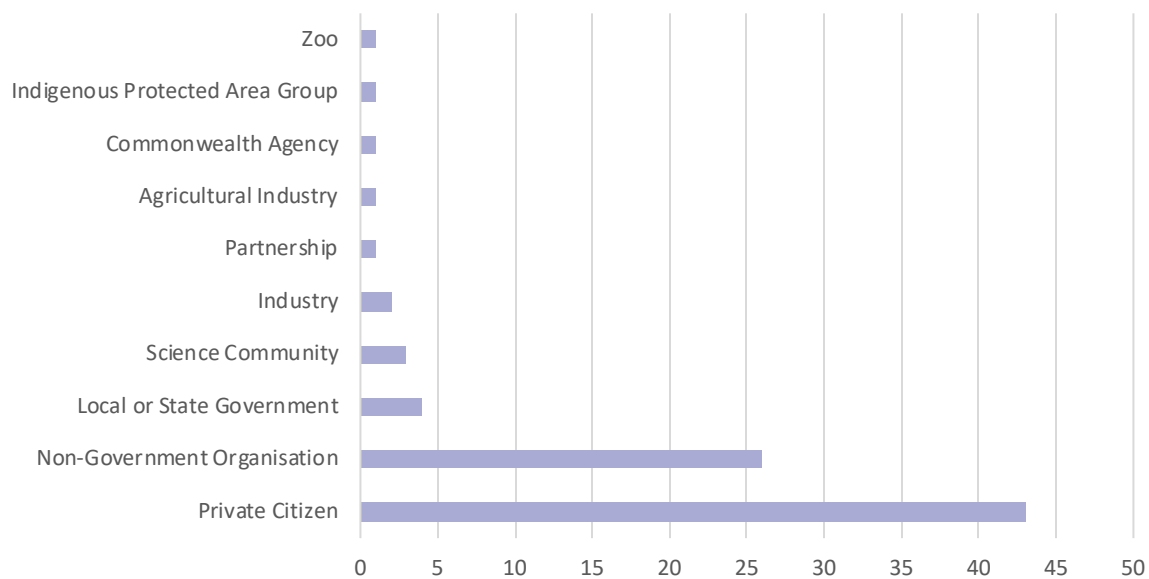


Figure 6. Survey participants by category. Note that one respondent was categorised as a ‘partnership’, consisting of 23 partners, including government departments, non-government organisations, community groups, and research groups collaborated to submit a joint response under the name Species Recovery Team. This partnership was counted as one respondent each even though it included multiple institutions.

2.3 General feedback

The majority of comments received from respondents related to specific Action Areas within the Plan. However, some respondents gave additional feedback on the Plan overall. This overall feedback was analysed and grouped into themes, and where possible, grouped into subthemes. Given the nature of qualitative data, some comments crossed multiple themes, or were very general in nature. This section therefore gives an overview of the overall topics which respondents focused on. Specific comments related to sections of the Plan are covered in depth in following sections.

It is important to note that the identified themes do not assess the relative importance of the themes beyond how ‘common’ they were, nor do they assess the generalisability of the themes beyond the provided submissions. The identified themes, and subsequent sub-themes, are simply a descriptor for a group of repeating or similar responses. Most of the feedback provided by respondents were specific points related to each of the Action Areas or survey questions. This feedback has been submitted to the OTSC team for consideration separately and summarised in the Action Area Sections. More general comments, not linked to specific parts of the Plan were coded in the overall themes presented here.

Figure 7 below visually depicts the ‘dominance’ of the different themes. The general theme mentioned by the greatest number of respondents was land-clearing, which was mentioned by 34 different respondents. This was followed by various suggested Plan inclusions mentioned by 30 different respondents. The third most dominant theme captured comments general funding and resourcing ($n = 28$), followed by prioritisation issues ($n = 23$) and climate change ($n = 20$). It is important to note that these are solely general comments; respondents’ specific suggestions in relation to an Action Area were coded in the relevant Action Area sections below.

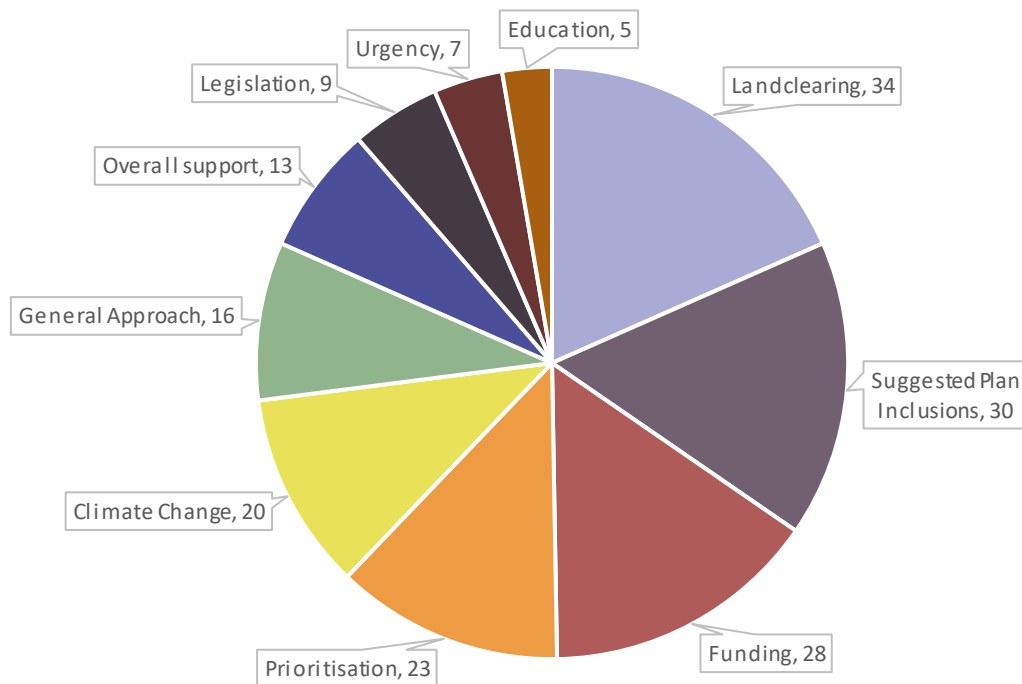


Figure 7. The number of respondents who commented on different themes. Each wedge represents a different theme, and the size of the wedge indicates the number of respondents who made general comments related to that theme.

Some respondents were more likely to focus on different overall themes as well as offer multiple suggestions within each theme. Figure 8 demonstrates the number of specific comments which were made by respondents in each respondent category. For example, many non-governmental organisations made multiple suggestions for report inclusions, as well highlighting issues of funding and legislation. Workshop participants considered land clearing and prioritisation issues in general most frequently, although suggestions on each Action Area predominated. Private citizens were most predominantly focused on land clearing and climate change.

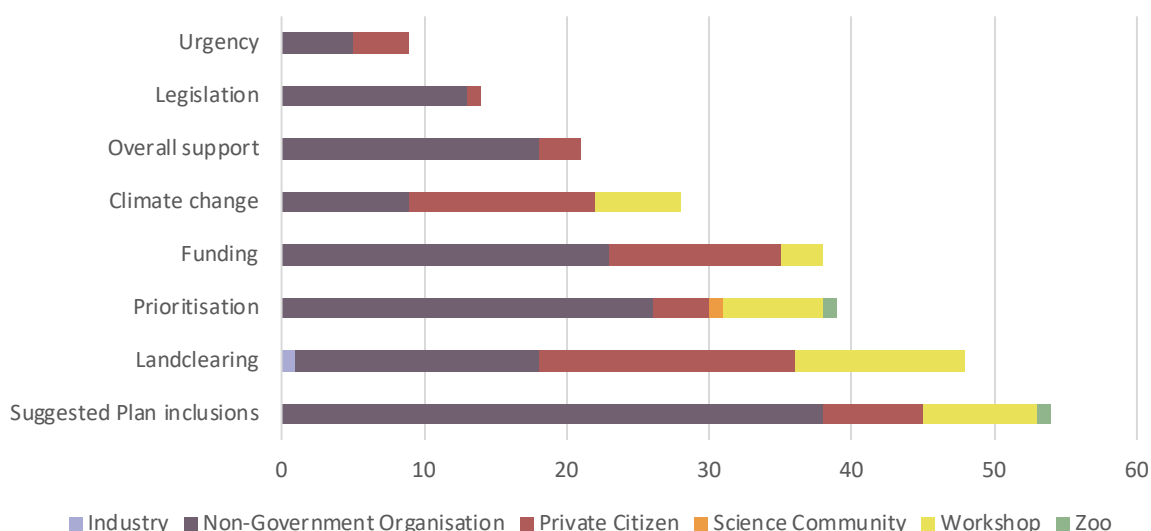


Figure 8: Themes by respondent category

Theme 1: Suggested Plan inclusions

This theme covered a diverse range of suggested inclusions for the Plan as a whole. These generally fell into three categories: projects or activities, new components, or additional approaches or processes. The first of

these categories included suggestions such as including more citizen science throughout the Plan, adding social, political, and economic actions which can influence outcomes, or ensuring that Indigenous considerations are centralised. The second category related to new components. The most common of these was the suggestion to include marine related actions and threats:

All the actions currently proposed are highly specific to Australia's lands, and not relevant to Australia's vast ocean territories. Ocean-specific proposed actions under the Action Plan should be as targeted as those currently proposed for the land. (Non-governmental organisation, Submission)

The third category broadly referred to approaches. These included taking a problem-solving approach, supporting evidence-based decision making and management outcomes:

The Action Plan needs to include evaluation of management outcomes, such as whether populations achieve target population levels, and whether populations that increase in abundance do so at rates less than or equal to the annual maximum possible rate (rm). The costs of management also need reporting so cost-effectiveness and return on investments can be estimated. (Private Citizen, Survey)

Theme 2: Land clearing

A number of respondents expressed concern that while the Action Plan was commendable it failed to address what they argued to be the primary driver of extinction, land clearing. In addition to general comments about land clearing, two particular causes of land clearing were specifically identified: development and grazing pressure. Some respondents recommended including and implementing regulations to halt land clearing, while other respondents suggested including more mentions of this threat within the Plan.

74% of EPBC-listed species had habitat cleared since the Act began; 93% of this did not go through the Act's process - so why does this strategy consider land clearing "covered" by other instruments? The evidence shows those instruments are woefully inadequate (Ward et al 2019 Conservation Science and Practice) (Workshop participant)

Theme 3: Funding

The second most common theme mentioned by respondents related to funding. This was of particular concern for non-governmental organisations and private citizens. Some respondents queried why no accompanying investment plan was provided. Other respondents highlighted many instances where lack of funding has restricted past efforts to conserve threatened species.

Whilst we welcome this new approach, by adding additional species and places and four additional action areas, it is currently difficult to determine how this will be funded without additional resourcing. It will be important not to lose focus on the momentum and work undertaken to date under the first Threatened Species Strategy and consider that it takes more than 4-5 years to improve the status of threatened species. (Industry, Submission)

Remaining themes:

The remaining themes covered a diverse range of topics. Similar to land clearing, a number of respondents highlighted the need for greater action on climate change. Around half of comments relating to the climate change theme focused on this overall threat, while others indicated the challenge of integrating this threat into the Action Plan itself:

More focused on restoration in the face of climate change - how can we incorporate climate change predictions/models into on ground activities to better enable ecosystems/species to adapt? Do we need to change the way we "manage" TS habitat? (Workshop participant)

For prioritisation, the most common concern around the reliance on *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) listed species alongside doubts around its effective implementation. Several respondents highlighted concern that species that are in decline but not yet threatened will not be considered or funded for action in the Plan. This then flowed to a concern around the purpose of requesting suggestions for priority species and places:

There is concern that the direction of the plan implies that some of the species and places the government have in mind, may have already been predetermined. This could undermine the value of the consultation process and the contributions and knowledge of stakeholders and wider community. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Finally, numerous respondents highlighted overall support for the Plan. As well as general comments some respondents also were appreciative of the efforts made throughout the consultation process:

We note with appreciation that the Office has taken on board feedback when finalising the Strategy, such as including the protection of habitat and more effective planning and believe it to be a stronger document as a result. (Non-Governmental, Submission)

Survey responses by Action Area

Of the 52 responses to the survey (excluding uploaded submissions), the Area that attracted the greatest number of responses was Area 2 (Conserving, restoring, and improving habitat) (Figure 9). The fewest responses were in the Areas of Emergency preparedness (Area 3) and Community leadership (Area 8).



Figure 9. Number of survey responses by Action Area.

Across the eight Action Areas survey respondents were able to select their level of agreement with each proposed action. It is important to note that while all survey participants were able to rate each Action, few submission respondents stated their level of support for each individual action in their submissions. Workshop participants were invited to provide three responses to each Action in written notes gathered during each workshop; 'support', 'could be improved', or 'problems'. Not all workshop participants provided this feedback.

Figure 10 provides an overview of the number of respondents who commented on each section of the Plan. In addition, the line indicates the percentage of comments which expressed either agreement or strong agreement with actions in each Action Area. As the graph indicates, Action Areas 1 and 6 were commented on by the most respondents. Just under 70 respondents provided general feedback, while over 60 survey and submission respondents provided feedback on the prioritisation component of the plan (including questions related to Actions and Targets, priority species and priority places).

When describing levels of support for Action Areas the following scale was used: low (<50%), moderate (51-60%), high (61-70%), very high (71-80%) and extremely high (>81%).

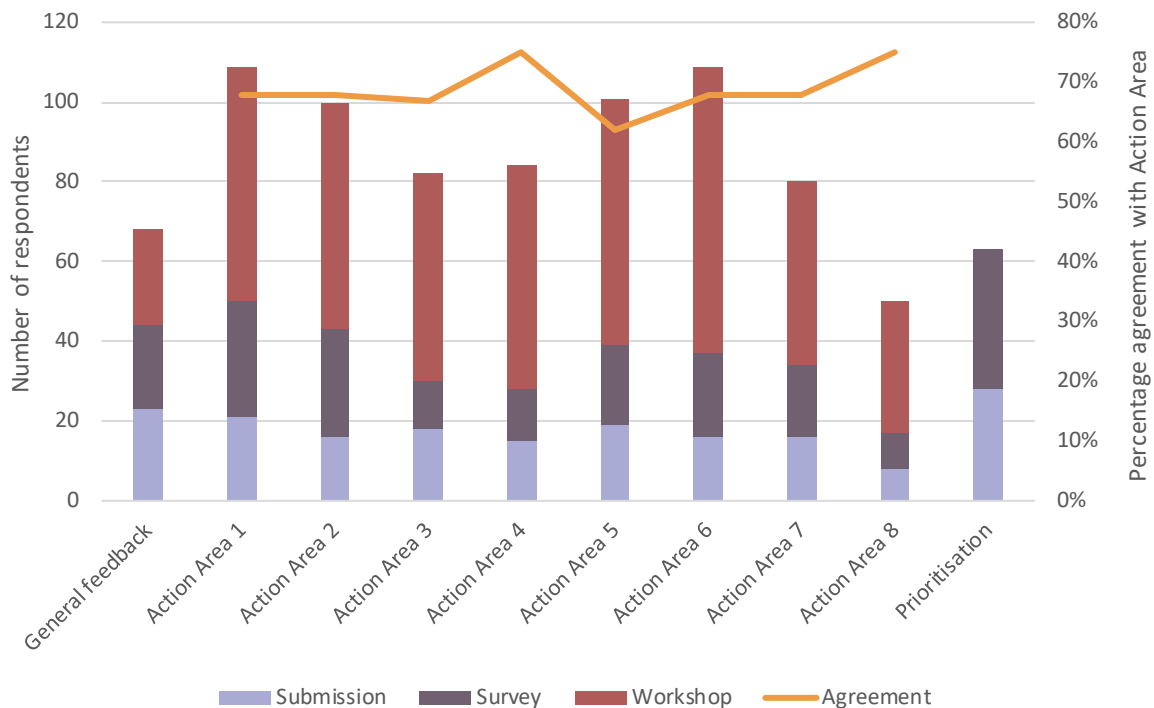


Figure 10: Number of respondents who commented on each Action Area and overall levels of agreement

2.4 Action Area 1: Mitigating new and established threats

The following sections present summaries of feedback on each Action within the eight Action Areas. Each section begins with an overview of the level of agreement with each Action. Following this an overview of summarised and grouped comments given by respondents is provided. While these comment groups give an indication of the general focus of respondents across each Action Area, it is important to note that comments could span multiple Action Areas and multiple concerns. For example, many respondents suggested improvements for each Action Area but did not specifically state whether these were intended to be an extension to an existing Action or a new Action. In addition to the broad overviews found in this report, a database (spreadsheet) of each individual, specific comment is provided to the OTSC team for separate review.

Four potential actions were included under this Area, focussing on mitigating effects of i) cats, foxes, ii) Myrtle rust, iii) invasive grasses and iv) managing risks around incursions of exotic pests, weeds, and diseases. Each action identified a suite of possible actions, all of which would:

- Reduce the threat
- Reduce the consequences
- Improve our capacity, effectiveness, or efficiency in dealing with the threat.

The proposed actions for this action area received a high level of support, with Action 1.3 receiving the highest level of agreement or strong agreement (78%). Across all Actions only 13 respondents expressed disagreement or strong disagreement, all of whom were survey respondents. In contrast, all submissions which stated their level of agreement expressed agreement or strong agreement, while one submission stated neutral support. The most common Action for suggested improvements by workshop participants was Action 1.1 (35%).

Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach to implementation of the Action Area, closely followed by suggestions for integrating the Action Areas across jurisdictions and suggestions for collaboration (Figure 11). The remaining comments were in relation to funding and suggestions for changes in the text of the Action Plan.

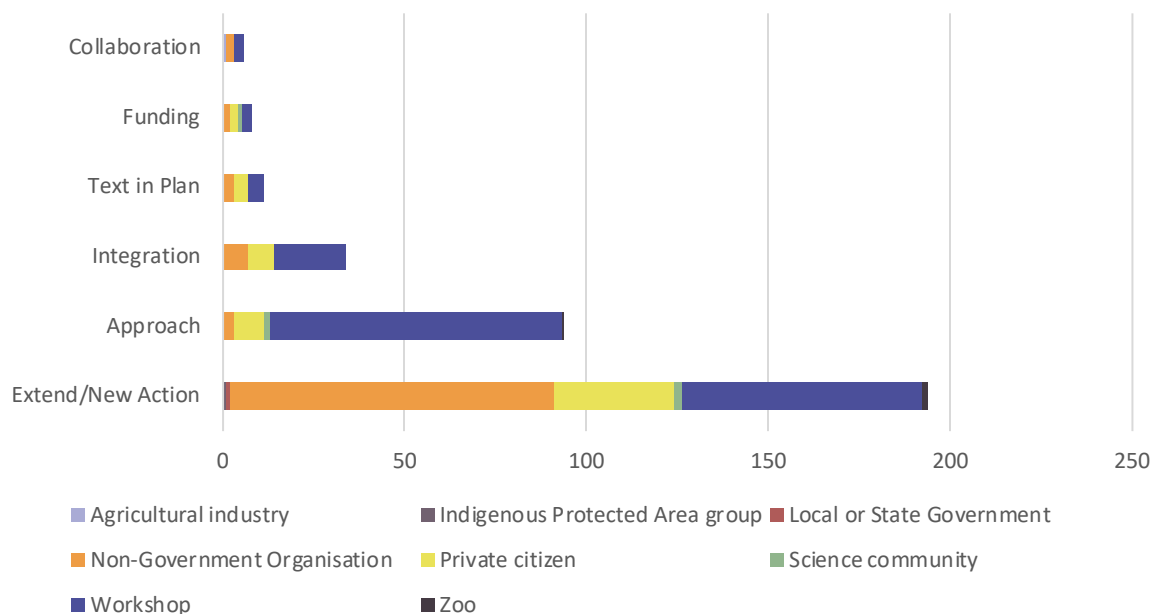


Figure 11: Overview of Action Area 1 comment categories by respondent type

While respondents commented predominantly on Action 1.1, different respondents focused on different Actions. Workshop respondents commented most frequently on Action 1.4 (74% of all workshop comments in this Action Area), while submitters were more focused on Action Area 1 more broadly. Survey respondents focused equally on Actions 1.1, 1.3 and the broader Action Area.

Comments on the overall Action Area by survey and submitters requested a range of additions, including the incorporation of more effective control techniques, humane control strategies and predator-prey relationships. Many also noted that while the focus on feral cats and foxes was welcome, extending this Action Area to include more species (such as herbivores and ants) and including marine environments would be beneficial.

*The document does not have a focus on the threats in marine systems. Key marine pest species such as Asian kelp *Undaria pinnatifida*, Northern Pacific Seastar *Asterias amurens* and the European shore crab *Carcinus maenas*, are all present in Victorian waters and have an impact on biodiversity. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)*

Workshop participants focused on methods to provide an integrated, interlinked approach which enabled addressing as many issues as possible. Participants suggested detailed planning to enable effective tackling of threats to achieve greatest impact, linking in with other Action Areas and taking multi-species landscape responses which build on existing tools such as safe havens and feral species taskforces. While many workshop participants also argued for the inclusion of a wider number of predators in Action 1.1, in general there was wide support for the approach taken in this Action Plan:

Delighted with the support for a national coordinated approach, noting comments about listing, and the need for proactive and pre-emptive approach, and the importance of cultural aspects. If the support for a national approach means ownership and implementation of the Action Plan - great!! (Workshop participant)

1.1 Invasive predator management - Feral cats and foxes

A total of 60% of respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement with the proposed actions for Action 1.1 (Figure 12). Only 2% expressing disagreement (all survey participants). Ratings provided by workshop participants indicated that while there were many suggested improvements, almost 40% of ratings indicated agreement. Thirteen of the 35 submissions stated their agreement levels, with over 90% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this Action.

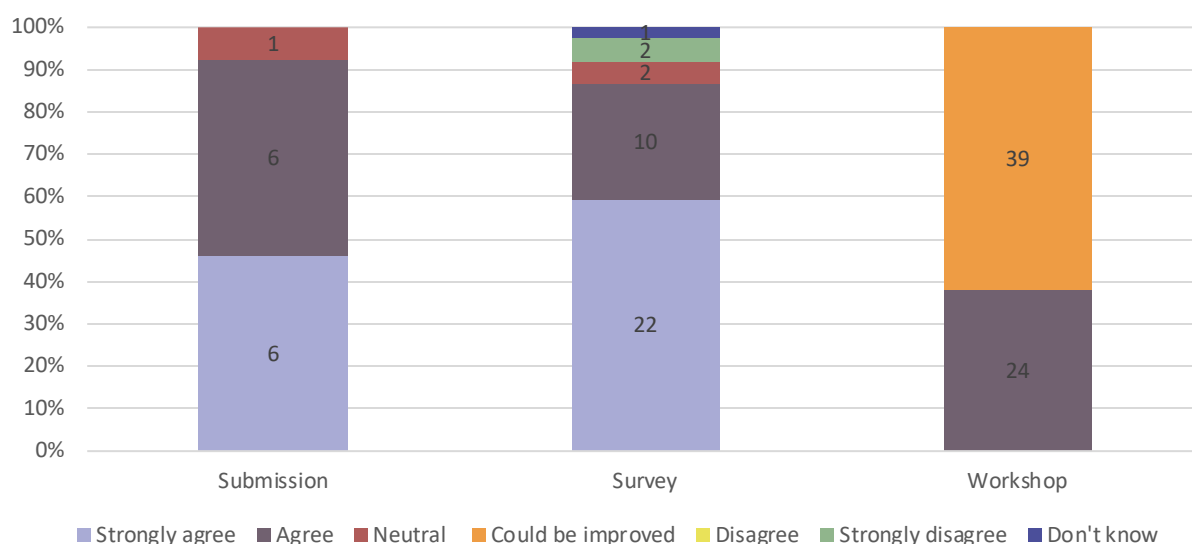


Figure 12: Evaluations of Action 1.1 (note figures in each bar refer to the number of respondents in each agreement level)

Many respondents were positive and noted the critical importance of this Action within the Plan:

This is important, maybe even mission critical. I like that it has recognised an interconnectivity between feral species (Workshop participant)

Most common response was to request the inclusion of feral herbivores and/or other invasive exotic and native species.

Invasive predator management should be expanded to include other priority pest animals that significantly impact threatened species and ecological communities and are identified as key threatening processes under the EPBC Act. Specifically, we suggest the additional inclusion of feral pigs and yellow crazy ants. (Non-government Organisation, Submission)

Other responses made suggestions regarding approaching this Action, such as two workshop participants who noted that it is 'important to report on cost-benefit scenarios' (workshop participant) and 'maintaining focus on managing this threat is critical for many species; many are not yet adequately protected' (Workshop participant). Other participants gave many options for extending the specific actions listed, often related to a concern that only species which are EPBC listed, and land based (i.e., not marine species, invertebrates, fungi) are being included:

Focusing only on species that are already threatened will not improve the outlook for those currently unlisted but declining. (Science community, Survey)

1.2 Managing myrtle rust

The proposed actions for this action area received a slightly higher level of support than Action 1.1, with 67% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement (Figure 13). Three survey participants expressed disagreement with the Action. In contrast, submission comments related to this were overwhelming in strong agreement with Action 1.2, while just under half of the workshop participants made suggestions for improvement.

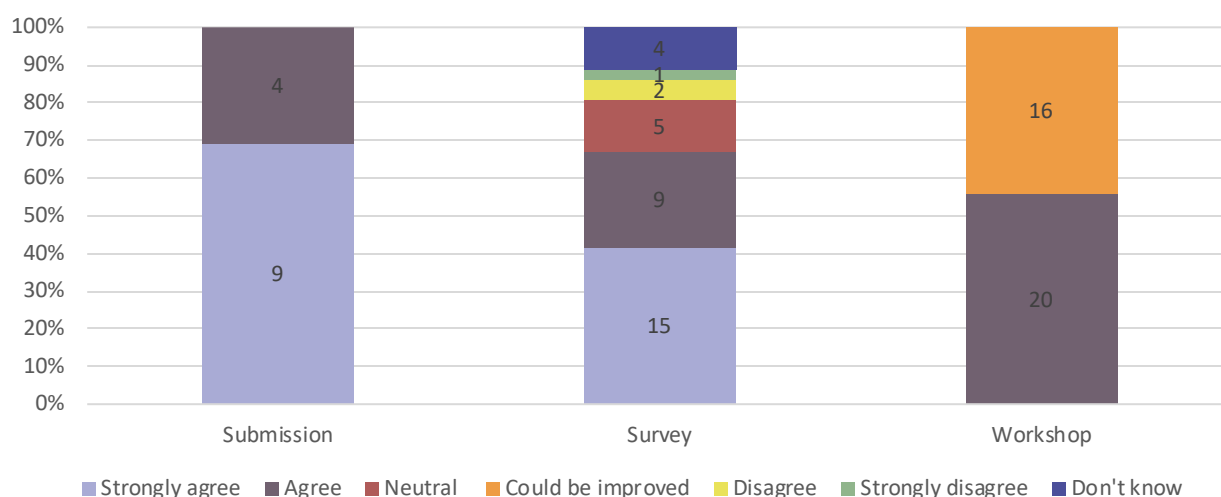


Figure 13: Evaluations of Action 1.2

While many respondents were strongly supportive of the inclusion of Action 1.2 in the Plan, the predominant comment related to a number of extensions to the proposed activities. These included broadening the remit to other fungal pathogens such as jarrah dieback, as well as highlighting the problems linked to restricting support to EPBC Act listed species only:

The TSS2 remit is tightly tied to EPBC-listed species and related 'places' (areas or habitat). Most of the significantly Myrtle Rust-affected species to date are not EPBC-listed; this threat process is fast-moving and fast-acting; the listing process is not. Listing needs data; no listing >>> no money >>> no data >>> no listing. Catch 22. Even with data, the EPBC listing process is very slow. (Private Citizen, Submission)

The second most common comment relating to this Action referred to the need to integrate it within other strategies and plans. The most mentioned was the National Action Plan for Myrtle Rust, which many respondents highlighted as a suitable plan to implement and follow.

1.3 Tackling invasive grasses

This Action received the highest level of support across Action Area 1. A total of 78% responses indicated agreement or strong agreement with the proposed Action (Figure 14). Three survey participants expressed disagreement with the Action, while no submission or workshop participants expressed disagreement. Similar to Action 1.2, submissions expressed predominantly strong agreement with this Action, while around 60% of workshop participants also agreed.

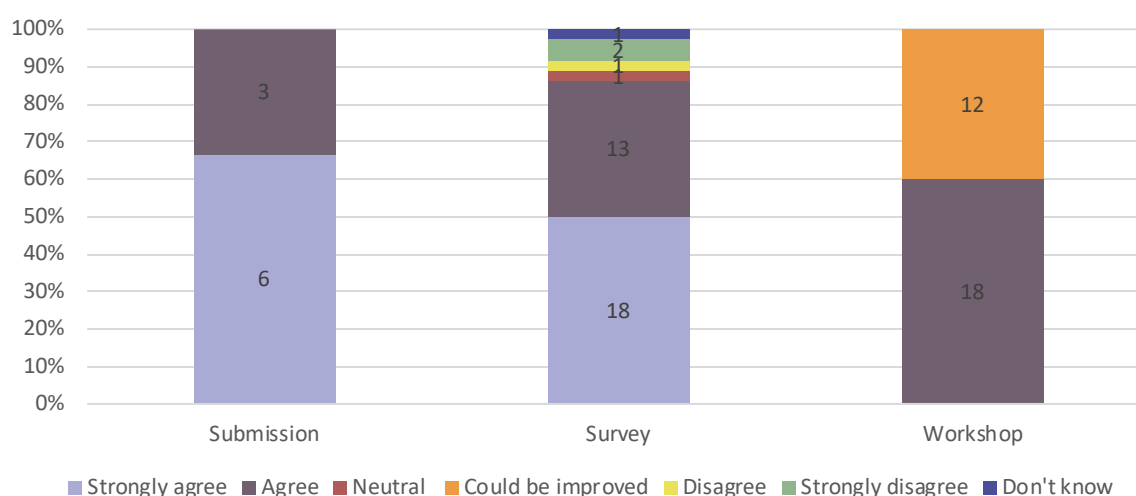


Figure 14: Evaluations of Action 1.3

Similar to Action 1.2, most comments from respondents related to proposed extensions of the existing activities. The most common of these recommended extending the Action to include other grasses, most notably Buffel Grass but also Opuntoid Cacti, African lovegrass, and regional weed invasions. Some respondents highlighted the collaboration opportunities this extension could also provide:

Buffel grass should be a high priority, with potential for collaboration with impacted Traditional Owners. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Some respondents requested more detailed justification for the prioritisation of grasses, while other respondents highlighted the need for anonymised data sharing opportunities to encourage agricultural landowners to share experiences with invasive grasses:

[Some stakeholders] do not wish to advertise details of the challenges that it faces with invasive grasses and exotic pests, weeds, and diseases. The data we collect on such events, their impacts, and our efforts to tackle them would doubtless be useful and an action to enable anonymized data collection on these topics may encourage more agricultural landowners in competitive environments to share experiences. (Agricultural Industry, Survey)

1.4 Preventing and responding to incursions of exotic pests, weeds, and diseases

A total of 60% of evaluations across all three respondent types expressed agreement or strong agreement with Action 1.4 (Figure 15). Five survey participants expressed disagreement with the Action. Just under half of workshop evaluations suggested that the Action could be improved. While only six submissions specifically stated their level of agreement with this Action, four of them expressed strong agreement.

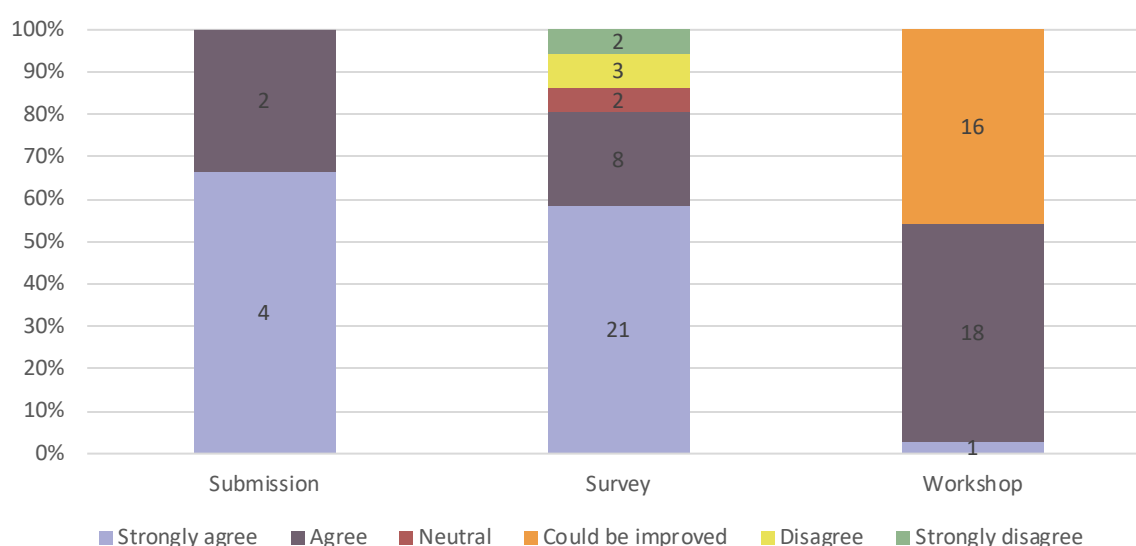


Figure 15: Evaluations of Action 1.4

Like Action 1.3, many respondents recommended increasing the number of invasive species of concern in Action 1.4. These included fungal pathogens, viruses, and bacteria. Respondents suggested that these species also needed to be assessed:

For viruses, bacteria, and fungal pathogens, we also need to assess what species we have and where they are found so we're better prepared to identify new threats and distinguish them from endogenous species. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Survey)

Other respondents also argued that Action 1.4 should include threats in the marine systems, such as Asian Kelp, Northern Pacific Seastar and the European Shore Crab. However, while one respondent argued that stronger biosecurity and surveillance measures should also be included in Action 1.4, another respondent argued against this:

We classified action 1.4 (Preventing and responding...) as DISAGREE because while we recognise that this is important from a biosecurity perspective and we support strong and effective action in this space, we do not think this should be a priority action under the Threatened Species Strategy. We expect that incursions of exotic pests, weeds and diseases should be appropriately managed outside of the Threatened Species Strategy through existing policy frameworks (e.g., Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030, Biosecurity Futures Group, National Biosecurity Committee, Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer). (Non-Governmental Organisation, Survey)

Other actions

Participants suggested a very substantial and diverse number of additional actions for this Action Area. Some actions suggested specific programs such as a detector dog network for fox den ID, while others included actions to address population specific threats such as genetic bottlenecks, supplementation, and translocations. Following Action 1.1, a common suggested other action was the inclusion of other species such as feral herbivores, marine invaders, overabundant native species, and invertebrates. Finally, some respondents also requested investigations into wildlife health:

An initiative to support investigations into wildlife health as a part of threatened species conservation would be welcome. (Zoo, Submission).

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- National ant plan needs implementation
- Establish baseline measurement and monitoring of feral and invasive species.
- Feral goats: Major threat neglected across much of Australia. Threat Abatement Plan needs review and revision
- We recommend that the Action Plan include an additional action for the management of feral herbivores

SMART targets

Around 25 comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 1. The suggested targets ranged from education and awareness to the protection of land and marine areas, to improving population response. One respondent argued that different targets may be needed according to geographical scope and species within refuges.

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- All local government areas have domestic cat control regulation in place by 2025
- All priority species have a Disease Risk Assessment completed by 2025
- By 2026, all major metropolitan areas are deemed ant containment zones.
- By 2031, a method of genetic sterilisation of foxes has been tested.
- A number of research projects commenced to investigate various level of intervention for fox and cat mitigation be commenced by 2023

2.5 Action Area 2: Conserving, restoring, and improving habitat

Actions included in this Action Area included building connectivity, protection and improving habitat and adoption of two-way fire management. As the area of connectivity is less mature, the possible actions focussed on planning and subsequent improvement. For habitat the focus was on engaging key stakeholders in protecting and restoring habitat. For two-way fire management the focus was on Indigenous engagement and raising community awareness.

Of the three specific actions, Actions 2.2 received 72% agreement or strong agreement and Action 2.1 received 68% agreement or strong agreement. Only 3% of all responses expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. Action 2.1 had the highest percentage of workshop ratings 'could be improved' (28%) in this Action Area.

Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach to implementation of the Action Area, closely followed by suggestions for integrating the Action Areas across jurisdictions and suggestions for collaboration (Figure 16).

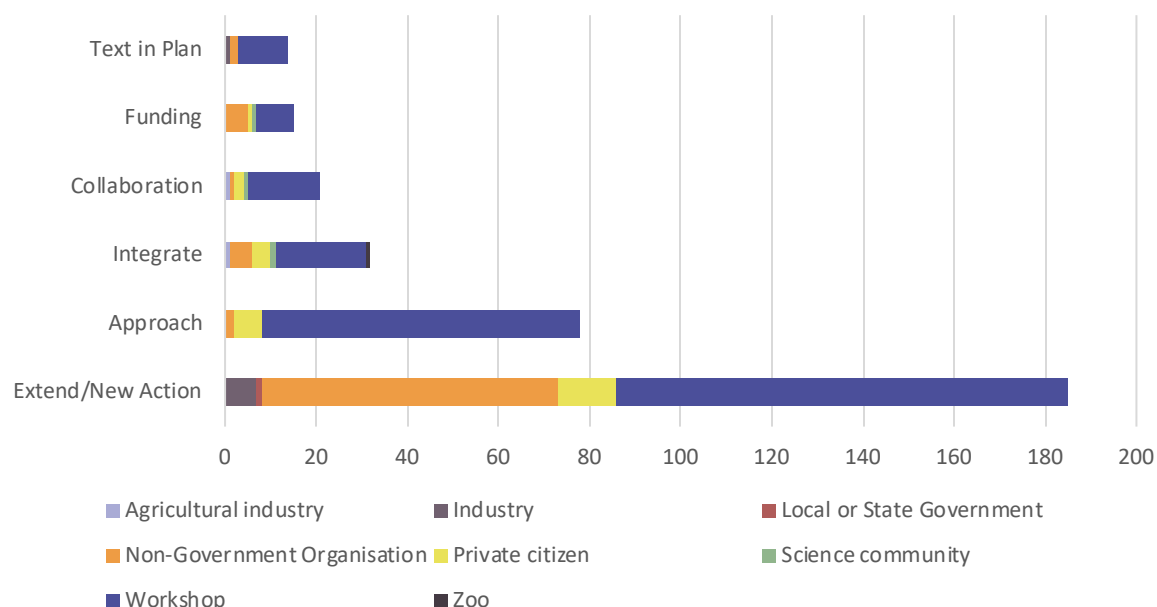


Figure 16: Overview of Action Area 2 comment categories by respondent type

Overall feedback from survey and submission respondents was positive. Similar to Action Area 1, some respondents noted the importance of including aquatic ecosystems and species, ensuring adequate funding is provided and increasing the scope of 2.3 to land and sea management. Most concern expressed by survey and submission respondents related to the need to preserve habitat in the first instance:

Prevent the removal or altering of key habitat areas of key threatened species (such as breeding areas for mobile species). This is particularly relevant for species that do not continuously occupy habitat and where small removal of habitat does not trigger the EPBC act - and we have a situation of death by a thousand cuts. (Private Citizen, Survey)

Workshop participants expressed overall support for this Action Area. Participants focused primarily on discussing approaches to the prioritisation of actions and how to increase their effectiveness. Some suggestions included the use of strategic corridor mapping, engaging with the community and other stakeholders, and identifying and protecting critical habitats. Concerns were raised about dependencies on ineffective offset arrangements, consideration for species not included in the EPBC Act and the absence of land clearing as a major risk in the Plan.

2.1 Building habitat connectivity

The proposed actions for Action 2.1 received a high degree of support, with 68% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement (Figure 17) and only 3% expressing disagreement (all survey participants). The strongest degree of agreement came from survey respondents, while 50% of workshop participant ratings expressed agreement with this Action. Of the sixteen submissions which stated their level of agreement with this Action, ten expressed strong agreement.

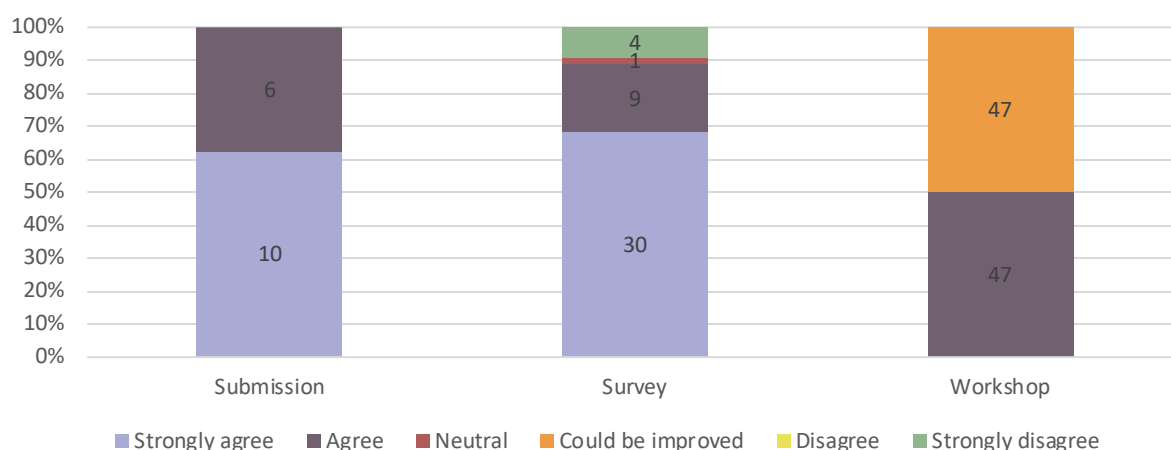


Figure 17: Evaluations of Action 2.1

The most common response to this Action was to provide points for extending the Action, followed by suggestions regarding the most effective approach to implementation. Among suggested extensions were including black/dark corridors for managing the impact of light pollution, including Indigenous led landscape planning, and establishing baselines, reference sites and buffers for corridors. Some participants queried the use of 'corridor' terminology:

Connectivity is important, but this is too simplistic. Corridors are sensible in areas that are fragmented landscapes but in 'intact' landscapes make no sense...seascapes and rivers also don't use the concept of corridors. I think it makes far more sense to break up the concept of connectivity around the degree of human influence on the land and be clear on what this means. Connectivity in intact landscapes is about retaining habitats (Workshop participant)

Many participants indicated that the approach taken would be critical to effectively achieving this Action's objectives. Some suggested approaches included distinguishing where Aboriginal burning practices were more appropriate, considering all actions through an Indigenous lens and preplanning how connectivity can be monitored.

2.2 Protect and improve habitat for priority species and places

The proposed actions for Action 2.2 received the highest degree of support in Action Area 2. Just over 70% of respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement (Figure 18) and only 3% expressing disagreement (all survey participants). The strongest degree of agreement again came from survey respondents, while just over 50% of workshop participant ratings expressed agreement with this Action. A total of 75% of submissions which rated their agreement with this Action expressed strong agreement.

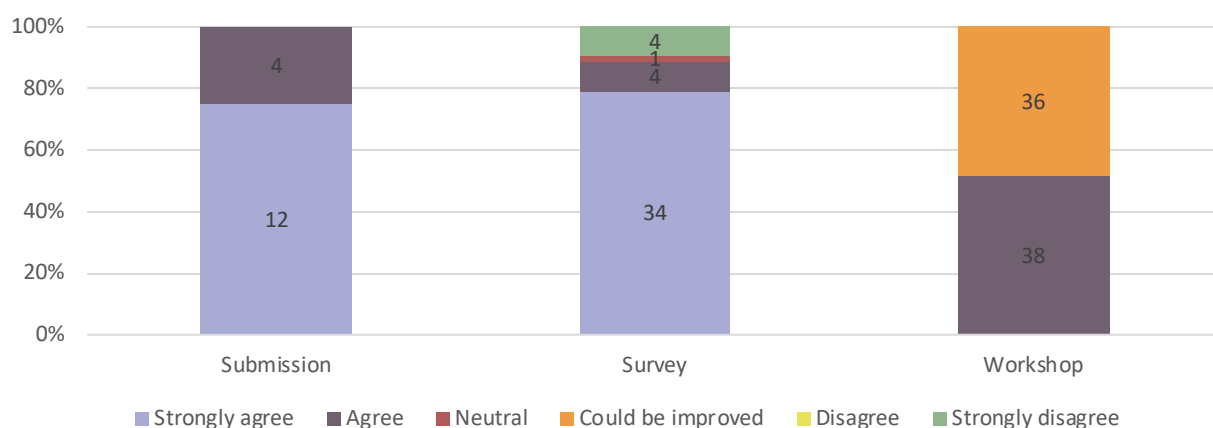


Figure 18: Evaluations of Action 2.2

Action 2.2 received the highest number of suggestions for extensions to the proposed activities among all actions in Action Area 2. Some of these referred to greater support for Traditional Owners for undertaking management projects

Support traditional owners in management of land and sea country by removal of feral animals (such as wild pigs) from sensitive habitats, such as mangrove forests. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Many other suggested extensions referred to regulation and legislation around habitat protection and prevention of critical habitat loss.

Not an additional action, however there are additional activities I recommend under Action 2.2. These are: strengthening legal protection of habitat and better enforcement of existing legislation. (Private Citizen, Survey)

Only two comments in this Action referred to the need to consider funding and investment, however many workshop respondents noted the opportunities to integrate activities within this Action with those being undertaken by other jurisdictions and organisations. These included suggestions to draw priorities from Recovery Plans, link with EPBC reforms and the Reef 2050 Plan, and undertaking actions guided by the National Standards for Ecological Restoration (developed by the Society for Ecological Restoration and partner organisations).

2.3 Improve adoption of two-way fire management

The proposed actions for Action 2.3 received a high degree of support with 65% of respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement (Figure 19) and 4% expressing disagreement (all survey participants). While many comments were gathered on this Action, respondents focused more on comments relating to Actions 2.1 and 2.2.

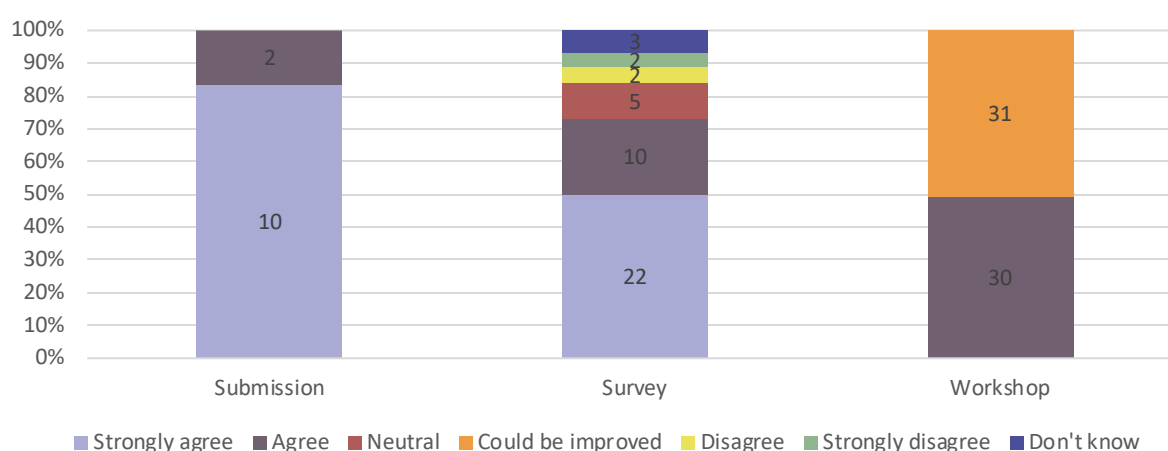


Figure 19: Evaluations of Action 2.3

Unlike Action 2.2, most comments relating to Action 2.3 focused on the implementation approach. Caution was suggested when considering the use of fire management due to many concerns. First, respondents noted that incorporation of Indigenous approaches are important for fire management but need to be integrated, not in competition with broader fire management practice. Second, consideration of different methods, expectations and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property was suggested. Finally, the need to share and transfer knowledge while establishing working relationships with Traditional Owner groups consistent with guidelines (such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) were noted.

There is still a lot to learn about fire management so, yes definitely implement the fire and land management practices we already understand and that we know work, and 100% work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to deliver appropriate fire and land management. For many areas, we

will also need to identify and develop most suitable fire regimes with Indigenous partners and monitor the impacts of these fire regimes on biodiversity. (Non-Government Organisation, Survey)

Other actions

Participants suggested over 30 additional actions in this Action Area. The suggested new actions varied substantially. They ranged from requests to identify and map critical habitat, strategies for mitigating aquatic weeds, requests to ensure that planting programs are ecologically appropriate and to develop programs focussed on monitoring and access to information:

A national database on species responses to all components of the fire regime is needed. Monitoring of fire impacts is also critically needed to ensure we test the effectiveness of any fire regimes applied for biodiversity conservation purposes. (Private Citizen, Survey).

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Habitat protection by increasing the national reserve/protected area network should be included
- Build on existing schemes, e.g. Biolinks
- Adopt the Society for Ecological Restoration National Standards for Ecological Restoration
- Explore incentive mechanisms for private landholders
- Include a focus on strengthening critical habitat provisions under the EPBC Act and ensure a focus on protecting habitats that provide climate refugia, now and into the future

SMART targets

Nine comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 2. Most suggested targets did not provide a timeframe or baseline, however most expressed the need to conserve more land, ensure no net loss of habitat and no further extinctions.

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- No significant degradation of habitat for threatened species
- By 2031, all existing threatened species habitat as of 2021 is protected from land clearing.
- Develop regulation that compels pine plantation owners to contribute to eradication of pine wildlings adjacent to their plantations
- By 2026, 80% of priority species habitat is protected through private land stewardship and on public land.
- By 2026, no decline in the extent or condition of priority species habitat.

2.6 Action Area 3: Emergency preparedness and response

This Action Area strives to improve the preparation for rapid response to future emergencies and urgent threats. This includes enhancing agility and collaboration, ready for future catastrophic events. The three actions in the Area seek to reduce the consequences of emergencies through establishing insurance populations and then improving the capacity to respond to imminent threats through improved access to information, improved planning, and application of the principles of adaptive management.

Of the three specific actions, Access to data (Action 3.2) received the highest percentage of support, with 71% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement with the proposed action. Insurance populations (Action 3.1) received 70% agreement/strong agreement while Action 3.3 (Future emergencies) received 64% agreement/strong agreement.

Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach to implementation, closely followed by suggestions for integration across jurisdictions and/or other legislation and collaboration (Figure 20).

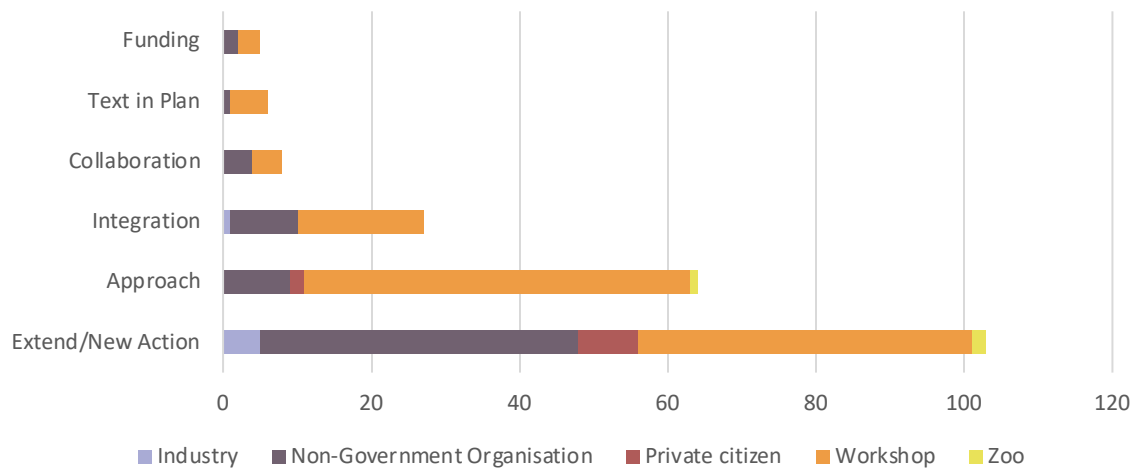


Figure 20: Overview of Action Area 3 comment categories by respondent type

Overall feedback from survey and submission respondents was positive. Respondents identified the need to identify risks and benefits of insurance populations, conserving genetic diversity and increasing the risk-planning beyond fire disasters to the marine environment. On the whole feedback on this Action Area was extremely diverse and detailed. Some submission respondents recommended that this Action Area link to other Areas or components of the Plan. These included requests to link with safe havens, include reference to resilience and provide a more defined set of actions. Some respondents commented more broadly about the need to mitigate climate change as an urgent emergency preparedness action (see general theme section above) while still expressing support for this Action Area.

Action Area 3 - Emergency preparedness and response: We support the proposed actions outlined under Action Area 3 however do not believe they go far enough to mitigate the impacts of dangerous climate change, especially change fire regimes (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Workshop participants also expressed support for this Action Area. Some participants highlighted the need to 'not reinvent the wheel' and look to other frameworks outside the threatened species framework which could be integrated and applied. Participants noted that action did not require perfect science, but instead adaptable and flexible systems with effective intelligence cycles.

3.1 Establishing insurance populations

The proposed actions for Action 3.1 received a high degree of support with 70% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement and no respondents expressing disagreement at all. One survey participant selected 'I don't know' when asked their agreement with this Action, while just over half of workshop comments suggested improvements (Figure 21).

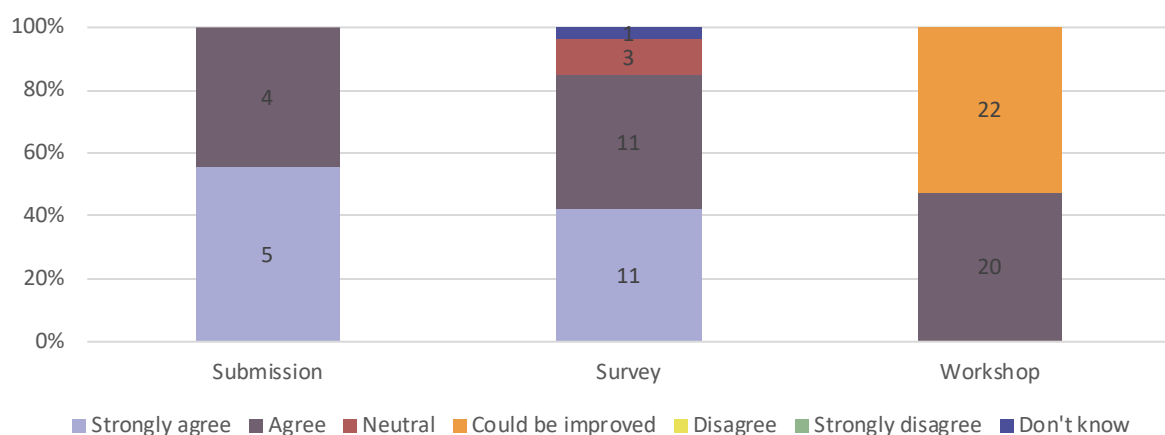


Figure 21: Evaluations of Action 3.1

The most common response to Action 3.1 were suggestions to extend the suggested activities or action parameters. For example, some respondents noted that the text should also address germplasm storage in addition to seed banking, while others suggested including wild to wild translocations of species and re-establishment of populations in the wild. The second most common comment related to the implementation approach. Again, this varied substantially, with some respondents highlighting the long-term commitment and resourcing required to establish and sustain insurance populations while others noted the importance of prioritisation decisions:

Insurance breeding programs should commence in advance of pending emergency if they are to provide the greatest chance of success. (Zoo, Submission)

3.2 Integrated, accessible data and mapping to assess impacts of natural disasters on species

The proposed actions for Action 3.2 received the highest level of support in Action Area 3, with 71% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement and only two survey respondents expressing strong disagreement (Figure 22). Seven of the nine submission responses expressed strong agreement.

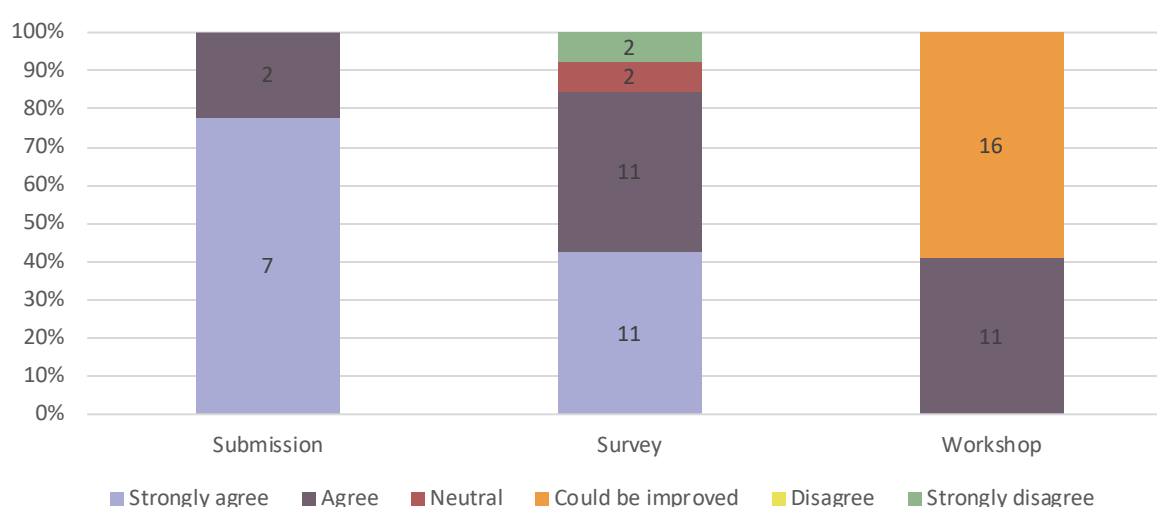


Figure 22: Evaluations of Action 3.2

Comments regarding Action 3.2 related equally to suggested extensions and approaches. Extensions included the use of modelling for resilience interventions, adding weather data/forecasting, remote sensing data and plicate predication tools. Alongside this many respondents noted that a successful approach to this Action requires interoperable and reusable data, as well as proactive outreach to emergency groups and others.

Please no more ad hoc once off data capture or even worse - data collected in research that we fund that we are unable to then access and use (Workshop participant)

3.3 Responding to future emergencies

In total, 64% of responses to this Action expressed agreement or strong agreement with the proposed inclusions and activities. Similar to Action 3.2, only two survey participants expressed strong disagreement. Of the many workshop comments collected, 22 suggested improvements to the Action, while just under 40% of workshop comments specifically indicated support for the Action (Figure 23).

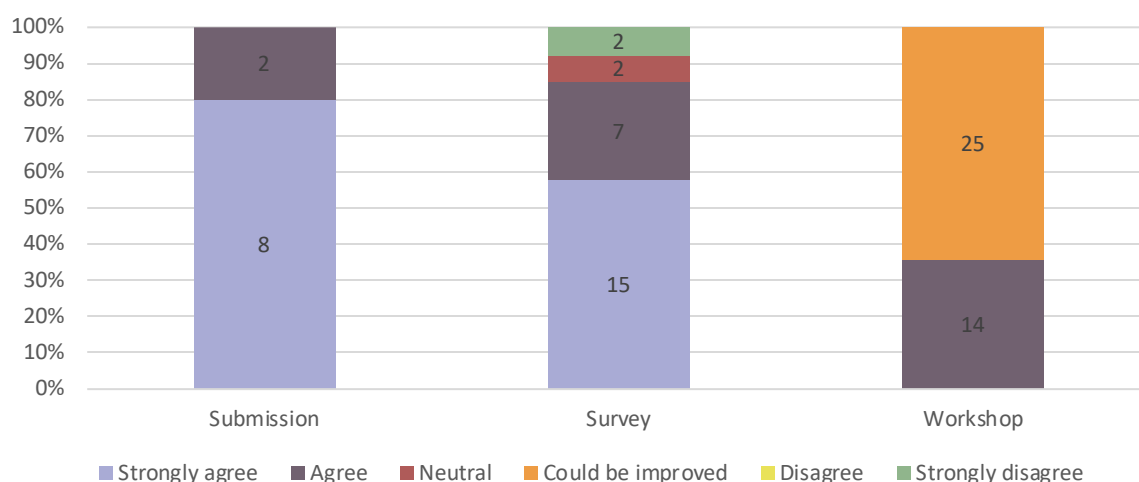


Figure 23: Evaluations of Action 3.3

Unlike Actions 3.1 and 3.2, few respondents suggested extensions to Action 3.3. Instead, most comments related to the implementation approach. These approaches including preparing emergency plans before emergencies occur, incorporating lessons learned from other disasters such as bushfires and floods, better decision-making processes in emergencies.

The speed of the on-ground response is critical. Despite lots of good work after 2019-20 fires, it took a long time to get the right action on the ground quickly (Workshop participant)

Other comments related to the need to integrate emergency preparedness and response with other response organisations and plans. Some respondents highlighted reports undertaken post-2019/2020 bushfires which collated lessons learned that could be integrated into this Action.

Ongoing, high-level liaison with state and territory agencies for all stages of fire planning: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Together with improved access to data, ongoing engagement with fire management agencies to ensure appropriate protection and management of threatened species habitat. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Other actions

Participants suggested around 40 additional actions for Action Area 3. Specific suggested projects include developing a national fire response database and a nation-wide rollout of an eDNA monitoring program. Other suggested actions related to revision of plans, such as the Action Plan for Australian Butterflies, as well integrating marine areas at risk of extreme weather events.

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Establish genome banks for threatened animals.
- Use modelling of extreme event risk to identify and protect priority species habitat refugia
- Make planning, response and recovery from major events a national priority in plans and the allocation of resources, particularly in the context of climate change
- Create a 'key natural assets' register comprising high value biodiversity assets
- Species mapping for endangered and migratory marine species to define current extents and areas of critical habitat

SMART targets

Only five comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 3, four of which provided timelines and measurable outcomes. One respondent suggested a target of 'no more extinctions on our watch', while other

targets covered the impact of natural disasters, generation of genomic data and storage of plant species in seed banks.

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- By 2026, the impact of natural disasters on priority threatened species habitats and life cycles, and priority landscapes is modelled and publicly accessible.
- By 2026, actions are underway to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on 50% of priority species and areas.
- By 2031, we have generated genomic data for all specimens residing in vertebrate natural history collections (would need more time for herbaria and insect collections).
- Aim for 100 per cent of Australia's known threatened plant species stored in one or more of Australia's conservation seed banks or botanical gardens

2.7 Action Area 4: Climate change adaptation and resilience

Climate change is emerging as a major additional threat to many ecological communities and species. The focus of this Area is to support threatened species' capacity to adapt to a changing climate or, where species are particularly vulnerable, undertake targeted actions to improve their adaptive capacity. Overall, reductions in the threats affecting threatened species are expected to increase their resilience, capacity to adapt and overall reduce their vulnerability. The three actions focus on improving our understanding of the impacts of climate change, identifying effective targeted actions, and integrating climate risk into conservation planning.

Of the two specific actions, Action 4.3 received the highest percentage of support, with 78% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement with the proposed action. However, Action 4.1 also received very high support (75%), as did Action 4.2 (73%).

Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach to implementation of the Action Area, a most common concern for workshop participants. This was closely followed by suggestions for integrating activities within Action Areas across jurisdictions and/or other legislation, which was a specific concern for Non-Government Organisations (Figure 24).

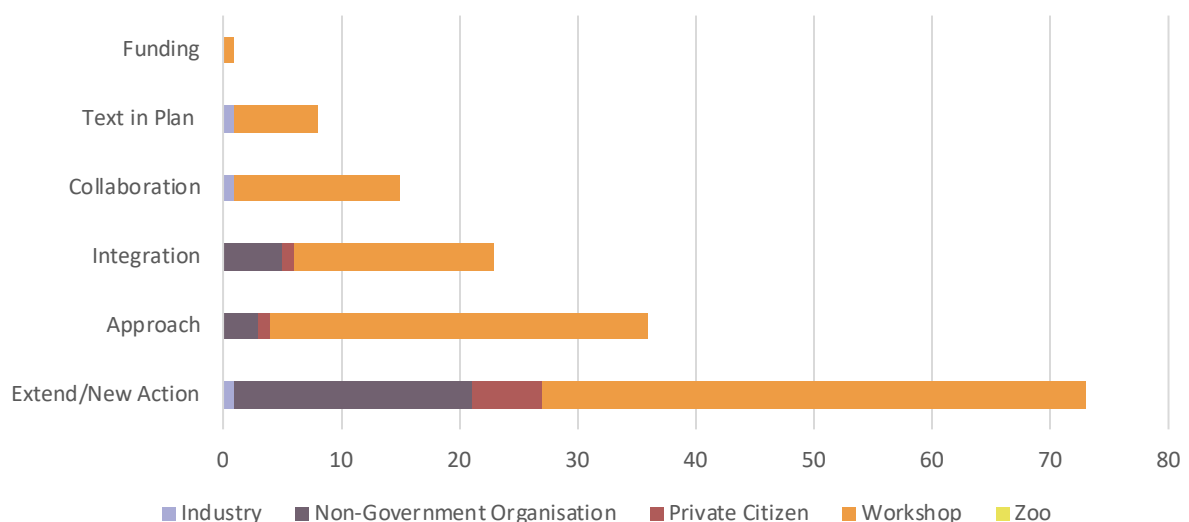


Figure 24: Overview of Action Area 4 comment categories by respondent type

Overall feedback from respondents across the workshop, surveys and submissions were very positive. Many respondents were highly supportive of the need to include climate change adaptation and resilience as a

specific Action Area. They recognised the difficulty in effectively planning for adaptation and resilience when climate changes rapidly, dynamically, and will result in yet unknown impacts.

This is a REALLY important action area for the update strategy. While the other action areas will also help to achieve climate resilience, it is good that this area is a priority on its own in the updated strategy. Climate change is among the most serious challenges facing biodiversity in our time. Our understanding of the impacts of heat, drought, and extreme events on biodiversity and, particularly, our understanding of how to manage landscapes and species to improve long-term climate resilience is lacking. (Non-Government Organisation, Survey)

Many workshop participants gave suggestions for including challenges associated with climate change into the Action Plan. Workshop participants highlighted the need to continue to collect data on impacts, priority species, and ‘climate-ready’ interventions, however also stressed that this is an area which will be constantly evolving:

Activities identified are all appropriate at this point in our understanding of responding to this issue. The actions here will be informed by the research in this area as it can be quite complex to evaluate how best to respond for different species (Workshop participant)

4.1 Research to better understand the impacts of climate change on threatened species, places and the threats

In total, 74% of responses to this Action expressed agreement or strong agreement with the proposed inclusions and activities. While eight respondents disagreed (n = 4) or strongly disagreed (n = 4), these were all survey respondents. Workshop participants’ evaluations were just over 60% support, and 40% suggestions for improvement. All submission responses for this Action expressed strong agreement (Figure 25).

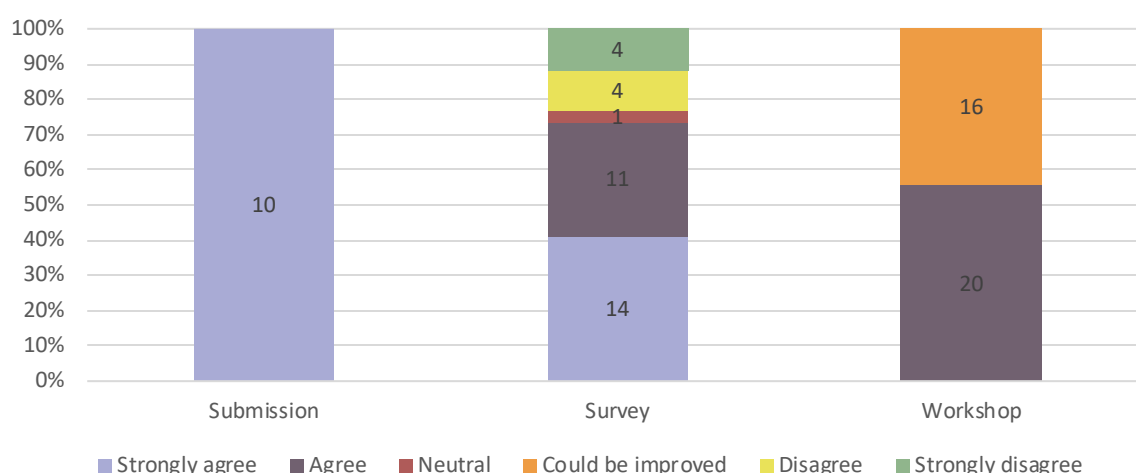


Figure 25: Evaluations of Action 4.1

Most comments related to Action 4.1 were suggested extensions for the proposed activities. These included linking the Action to community-based programs and citizen science programs, incorporating the impact of climate change on marine habitats and ecosystems, and undertaking broad impact mapping. Some respondents also noted the benefits of collaboration with different groups to foster bottom-up action:

Local scale Traditional Owner/ Indigenous engagement: CEWO have some work happening at the local level with a localised climate change adaptation and resilience project. This is an example of a bottom-up approach (Workshop participant)

4.2 Targeted actions for climate-susceptible priority species and places

Similar to Action 4.1 there was a strong degree of support for this Action across submission and workshop respondents, with 77% of responses expressing either agreement or strong agreement. Three survey respondents expressed strong disagreement while one survey respondent selected ‘I don’t know (Figure 26).

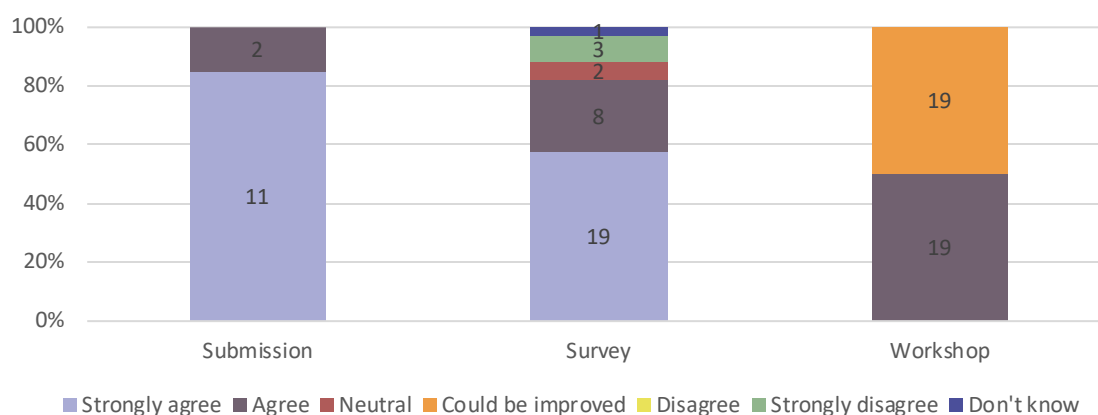


Figure 26: Evaluations of Action 4.2

In contrast to Action 4.1, many comments focusing on Action 4.2 focused on the implementation approach. These primarily reflected the challenge on incorporating climate impacts in a constantly evolving environment. Some respondents suggested that the approach needs to consider what ‘climate-ready’ conservation is, for example, and how options such as translocation and assisted colonisation may impact on existing species. Suggestions for effective approaches were provided by several workshop participants in particular.

[The] impacts are already occurring so for some will need to take a no regrets approach, however, [it is] important to try and understand the risks to minimise unintended consequences. (Workshop participant)

4.3 Integrating climate risk into conservation planning

Action 4.3 received the highest level of support across Action Area 4, with 79% of responses expressing either agreement or strong agreement with the proposed inclusions and activities. Only one survey respondent strongly disagreed with the Action, while most submission respondents strongly agreed. Workshop participants’ evaluations were just over 40% support, and 60% suggestions for improvement (Figure 27). Like Action 4.2 and 4.1 submissions responses were primarily in strong agreement with this Action.

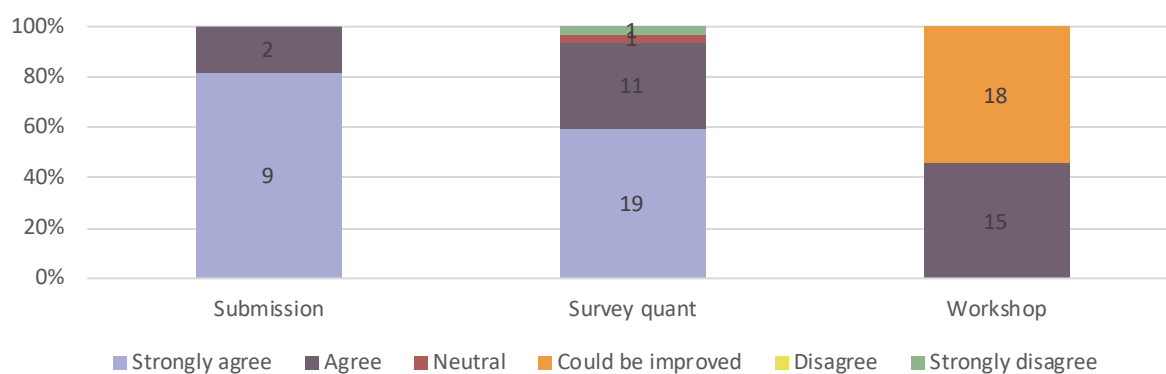


Figure 27: Evaluations of Action 4.3

Like Action 4.2, most respondents focused on the approach to implementation in their consideration of this Action. Many noted that integrating climate risk into planning was important and necessary, while raised concern around how risk can be better understood, evaluated, and incorporated. Some respondents noted that the approach to this Action should remain flexible, build on work done by organisations such as regional NRMs and is efficient and effective.

We really must recognise we simply do not know what the actions we need to undertake to make species resilient to climate change. We do not know how to deal with disease and climate change, or invasive species and climate change (Workshop participant)

Other actions

Participants suggested almost 20 additional actions for Action Area 4. While many were specific, such as including habitat retreat planning for coastal species, developing an aligned land carbon policy, and updating the 2009 Biodiversity Vulnerability Assessment, one respondent highlighted the substantial challenge of prioritising specific projects in this area:

The range and diversity of projects addressing the risks of climate change is staggering, with no clear direction or assessment of the value of individually research driven projects. The Threatened Species Research Hub could assist with the interpretation and dissemination of climate change research to relevant practitioners. It could also ensure that future climate. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Better linkage and progress on blue carbon methodologies to encourage biodiversity co-benefits
- Protect Australia's existing terrestrial carbon stores, stocks and flows & High Conservation Value ecosystems from degradation and destruction
- Assessing cumulative impacts and potential relative scale of climate impacts
- Integrate fishery management plans with conservation planning and climate risk analysis
- Ensuring no direct offsetting of fossil fuel emissions with land carbon credits either domestically or internationally

SMART targets

Ten comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 4. A number of these targets reflected the desire of respondents to see meaningful action on climate emissions reductions at a national level. One respondent highlighted four dimensions to consider in a possible framework for setting SMART targets in this area, including

1. Mitigating or reducing the effects of climate change, 2. Changes in species/ecosystem resilience to CC associated events, 3. Changes in the range or distribution of species/ecosystems, 4. Populations of target species (Private Citizen, Survey)

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- By 2050, a Zero emissions target.
- By 2026, no loss of old growth (remnant) forests compared to 2021 baseline.
- By 2026, 20% increase in native forest extent.
- Primarily to sign up for a 2030 carbon free Australia at the upcoming Cop26
- There should be recovery plans for all threatened species with strong conservation actions to address climate threats.

2.8 Action Area 5: Effective planning for conservation

The breadth and scope of Australia's conservation challenges and the diverse stakeholders engaged in conservation activities requires effective planning to ensure partnerships function effectively and efficiently. Planning is also critical to ensure that limited resources are directed to priority activities that have the best chance of succeeding. The two Actions in this Area focus on having relevant, current conservation planning documents available for priority species and places and identifying areas where conservation planning can be improved. The possible activities focus on various elements of conservation planning across a diverse network of stakeholders and development of the capacity to develop regional and multi-species plans.

Of the two specific actions, Action 5.1 received the highest percentage of support, with 64% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement with the proposed action. In contrast, Action 5.2 (New Tools) only received 55% support, with 8 respondents stating that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the action, or 32 workshop participants who felt that the action could be improved.

Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach to implementation of the Action Area, a most common concern for workshop participants. This was closely followed by suggestions for integrating the activities within the Action Areas across jurisdictions and/or other legislation, which was a specific concern for Non-Government Organisations (Figure 28).

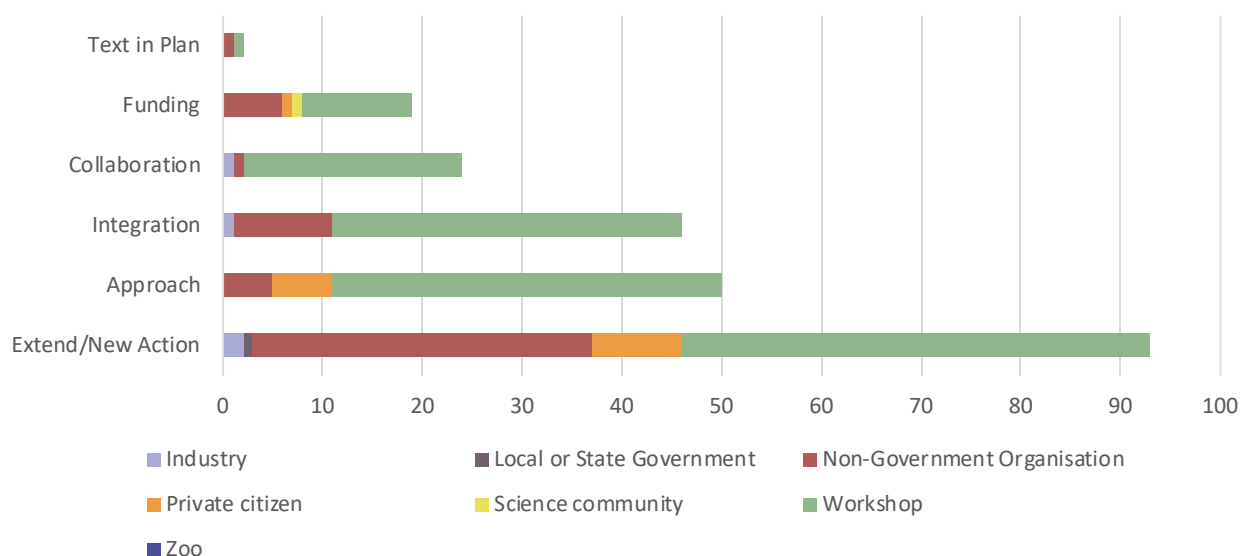


Figure 28: Overview of Action Area 5 comment categories by respondent type

Survey and submission respondents commented equally on the implementation approach, the need to enhance integration across jurisdictions and governing bodies, and funding concerns. There was some concern that Recovery Plans, for example, have been an ineffective approach to implement priority actions. This concern was linked to past conservation planning instruments and funding options, which have led to less-than-optimal outcomes in the past.

All threatened species need (as a starting point) recovery plans that are feasible, resourced, monitored and accountable. Many species lack even this basic information and direction for improvement. (Science Community, Survey)

Overall feedback from workshop participants indicated that many agree with the need to get conservation planning right, and that this is a fundamentally important aspect of addressing ongoing decline of threatened species. However, many respondents noted the importance of many different factors which can impact on effective conservation planning. These include ensuring plans are streamlined, backed up by strong laws, are built using past learnings and include mechanisms for sharing and coordination exist across sectors, jurisdictions, and groups. Finally, many respondents noted the need for resourcing and community involvement in this critical area.

Adequate resources, setting of national standards and strong laws that protect our threatened species and communities are necessary to achieve effective planning for conservation and real conservation outcomes. Community engagement again, including support for citizen science, is essential to build community will for effective conservation planning. (Non-Government Organisation, Survey)

5.1 Conservation planning and coordination for priority species and places

The proposed actions for this action area received a high level of support, with 64% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement (Figure 29). Three survey participants expressed disagreement with the Action and another three expressed strong disagreement. In contrast, submission comments related to this were overwhelming in strong agreement, while around half of the workshop participants made suggestions for improvement. Twelve of the fourteen submission responses expressed strong agreement.

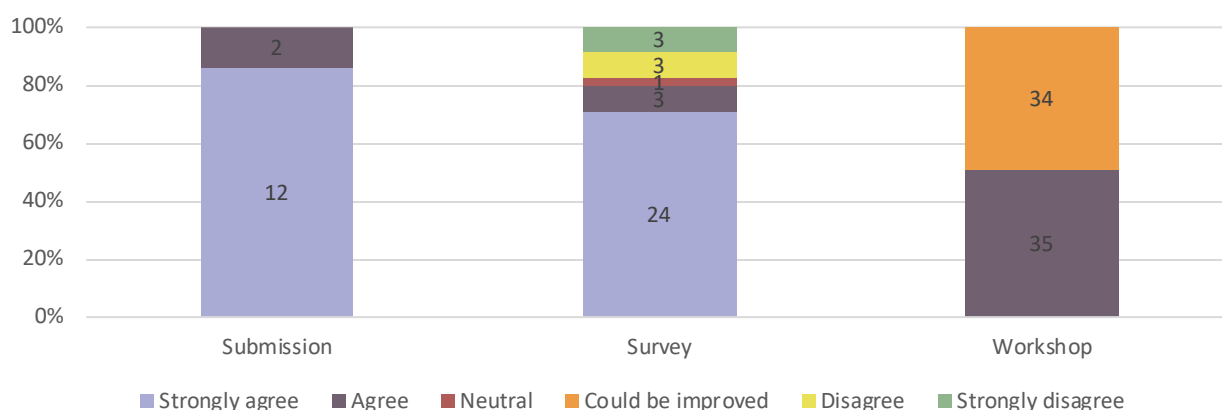


Figure 29: Evaluation of Action 5.1

The most common comment relating to this Action were proposed extensions to the existing proposed actions. These extensions included considering Biodiversity Impact Assessments, an increased focus on threat abatement, and best practice guidelines.

It would also be helpful to consider the development of some best practice guidelines for key threats to biodiversity (to get broader impact than just a few threatened spp). Examples would be Adoption of National Action plan for Myrtle Rust (2020) or development of best practice management for impact of fire frequency on plants (Workshop participant)

Several comments combined suggested extensions with the need for a commitment to resourcing, for example by funding more Healthy Country Plans or resourcing more broadly.

We recognise the role of conservation planning, primary documents, and coordinated actions for the delivery of successful recovery programs. Even though the Forty-spotted pardalote is a nationally endangered species, it has no current recovery plan or funding to support management and monitoring. Piecemeal funding for intermittent actions does not build a holistic integrated program, nor does it foster communication between delivery partners or build the cohesive team needed to ensure recovery efforts are delivered strategically and evaluated for their effectiveness. This must change. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Several comments also related to the challenge of integrating activities in this Action with other jurisdictions or organisations. Respondents mentioned the need to integrate with other conservation planning options such as CMA's Regional Catchment Strategies and Marine Park zoning reviews, while ensuring integration between Regional Plans and Threat Abatement Plan's. Most specifically, numerous respondents highlighted the need integrate this Action with the EPBC Act, including the full 38 recommendations of the Independent Review.

We note again that it is unclear how this Action Area is aligned with the full 38 recommendations of the Independent Review of the EPBC Act, including the strong recommendations for legally binding national standards to protect habitat and species and independent institutions to enforce such standard (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

5.2 Pilot new conservation planning tools

The proposed actions for this action area received a lower level of support than Action 5.1, with 55% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement (Figure 30). Six survey participants expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with the Action, while one submission and one workshop participant disagreed. Correspondingly, a larger proportion of workshop comments related to suggestions for improvement. One submission response disagreed with this Action while one other selected 'neutral'.

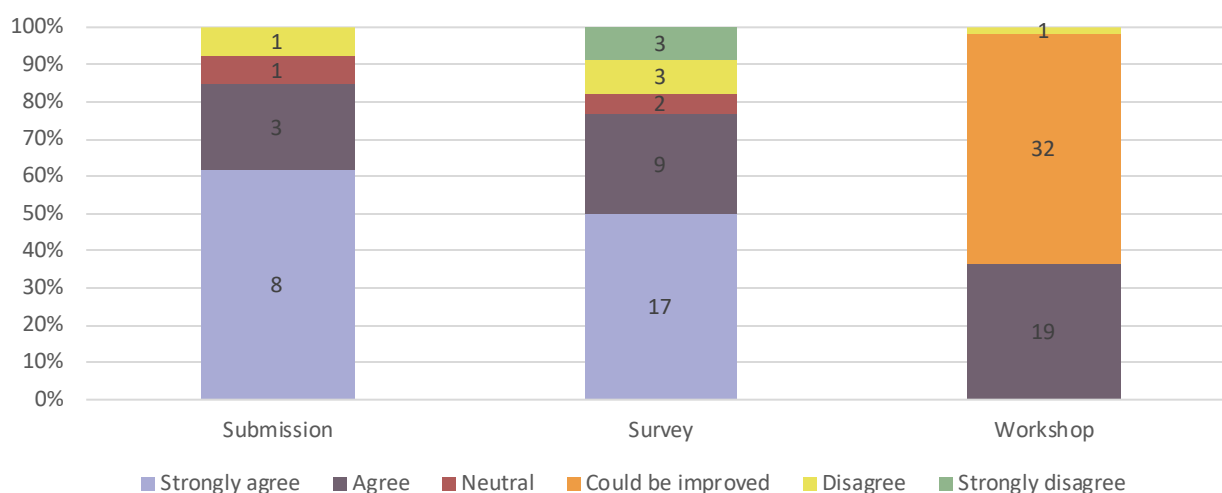


Figure 30: Evaluations of Action 5.2

A few comments related to the challenge of integrating work undertaken in this Action Area and ensuring that implementation will actually result in activity. As one workshop participant noted, *‘people get frustrated with planning processes and strategies that don’t result in activity’*. Another workshop participant noted *‘Multi-regional planning has been tried and failed in the past. Very hard to get it right’*. To combat this planning fatigue numerous suggestions for effective integration and operationalization were made. These included merging/linking new planning tools with existing tools, undertaking regular reviews to understand what has and hasn’t worked in the past, and committing to funding for implementation.

Without sufficient funding and resources including human resources, backing conservation plans then the plans themselves are useless. So, while I agree with the importance of planning, they can also be wasted time and energy if not sufficiently supported. (Private Citizen, Submission)

Similar to Action 5.2, many comments related to the need to integrate conservation planning tools, highlighted the importance of transparency, governance, inclusion and understanding whether new plans are actually required.

We would argue that the CMAs Regional Catchment Strategies and other sub-strategies and plans already do this. Our RCSs support the protection and habitat restoration requirements for multiple threatened species and places. They have been developed with agencies, researchers, community using best available science. If there is a requirement to go into more detail, then these plans can build on the RCS. Historically CMAs had more localised planning for biodiversity called Habitat Network Action Plans. Money would be better spent on the ground than doing more planning. (Workshop participant)

Other actions

Participants suggested a wide range of additional actions for Action Area 5. While many of these followed on from comments made under Action 5.1 and 5.2 regarding the need for integrating planning tools and funding planning implementation, one submitter also highlighted the need to include fish conservation within this Action Area and the Plan more broadly.

Suggest that under Action Area 5 - Effective planning for conservation, a key priority for fish conservation in Australia would be preparation of a national Action Plan for Australian Freshwater Fishes. Such plans exist for birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians and provide an important knowledge base and tool for prioritising conservation actions and species. (Private Citizen, Submission)

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Dedicated species coordinators (or for groups of species)
- Appropriate data standards.
- Update Marine bioregional plans
- Prepare 'referral guidelines' for each priority species and place
- Support on-ground conservation practitioners to utilise best-practice guidelines. Data sharing agreements/policies
- Reform the 'Register of Critical Habitat' under the EPBC Act

SMART targets

Ten comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 5. A number of these comments were duplicated from other Action Areas. Most targets related to either increasing the number of species with resourced recovery plans or ensuring that all vulnerable species have a recovery plan completed by a certain date.

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- All priority species and places have recovery/management plans updated to reflect current status and threats and that recovery/management actions have been implemented for all priority species
- By 2026, all short-term actions identified within existing conservation plans for priority species and places are implemented.
- Have a current recovery plan in place for all priority species within the next 2 years.
- All vulnerable species to have an appropriate conservation plan by end of this action plan.

2.9 Action Area 6: Knowledge and tools

Improved knowledge and tools, including Indigenous ecological knowledge, will improve Australia's capacity to sustain its threatened species. Three of the Actions in this area relate to the implementation of an adaptive management framework where monitoring provides feedback on the effectiveness of activities and supports a continuous cycle of improvement. Monitoring standards, base line data and data sharing are all critical to the evaluation of management effectiveness. The remaining two actions relate to improving our understanding of environmental systems and building our capacity to tackle threats, collect data and make decisions about conservation actions.

Of the five specific Actions, Action 6.5 received the highest percentage of support, with 71% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement with the proposed action. Action 6.4 received the lowest support with 63% agreement or strong agreement.

Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach to implementation, a most common concern for workshop participants. Suggestions for integrating activities across jurisdictions and/or other legislation were third most prevalent, followed by concerns around funding (Figure 31).

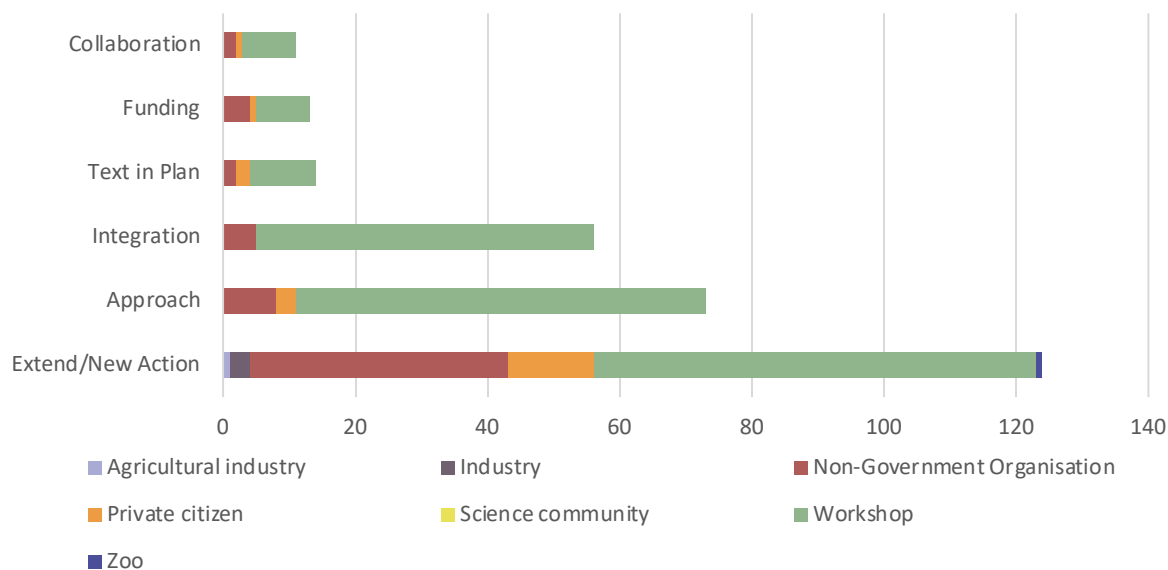


Figure 31: Overview of Action Area 6 comment categories by respondent type

Overall feedback from respondents highlighted the broad nature of this Action Area and the assistance clear objectives, standards and protocol would provide. These would assist in addressing concerns around data integrity, duplication, and transferability. We elaborate on these comments in the relevant Action Area sections below.

Framing sounds like there will be new standards. What do we already have in place that we will align with? Need to make sure we aren't duplicating and that the monitoring approach aligns with and across states. (Workshop participant)

6.1 Monitoring standards

The proposed actions for this action area received a high level of support, with 64% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement (Figure 32). Only two survey participants expressed disagreement with the Action, while 22 workshop participants made suggestions for improvement. A total of ten submissions stated their level of agreement, with nine expressing agreement or strong agreement, while one selected 'neutral'.

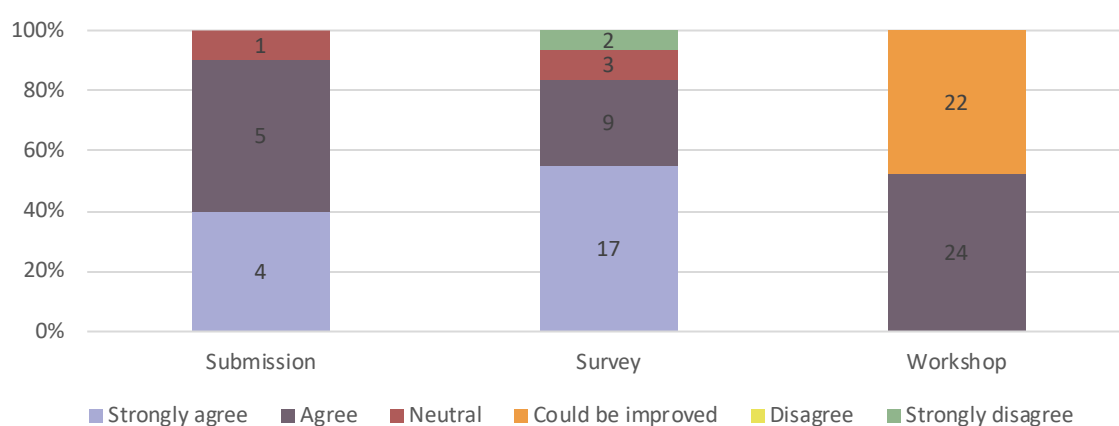


Figure 32: Evaluations of Action 6.1

The most common comment made by respondents regarding Action 6.1 related to the approach undertaken for implementing this Action. For example, one workshop participant noted:

We commend the intent to develop monitoring standards to consistently demonstrate how actions for priority species and places are meeting Strategy targets. However, we caution that there is unlikely to

be a one-size-fits-all monitoring methodology even for a single species across multiple habitat types at the national scale. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

A number of comments also related to the challenge of integrating work undertaken in this Action Area with other methodologies, standards and organisational approaches. One survey participant highlighted past challenges which can be improved through integration with recent related work:

Australia's commitment to the CBD was to establish a national biodiversity monitoring program by 2015. This hasn't been successfully or robustly achieved. We should be seeking a technology-led solution of remote sensors that use machine learning to identify wildlife signs on-board and then transmit the data to a central repository for broadcast of robust metrics of species status (distribution/occupancy) as has been proposed via the NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub by Matt Hayward of the University of Newcastle. (Private Citizen, Survey)

6.2 Baseline data for priority species and places

Action 6.2 received 64% support across all respondent type. As with other Actions, disagreement was only expressed by survey participants. Over half of submitters expressed strong agreement with this action, while just under half of workshop participants provided suggestions for improvement (Figure 33).

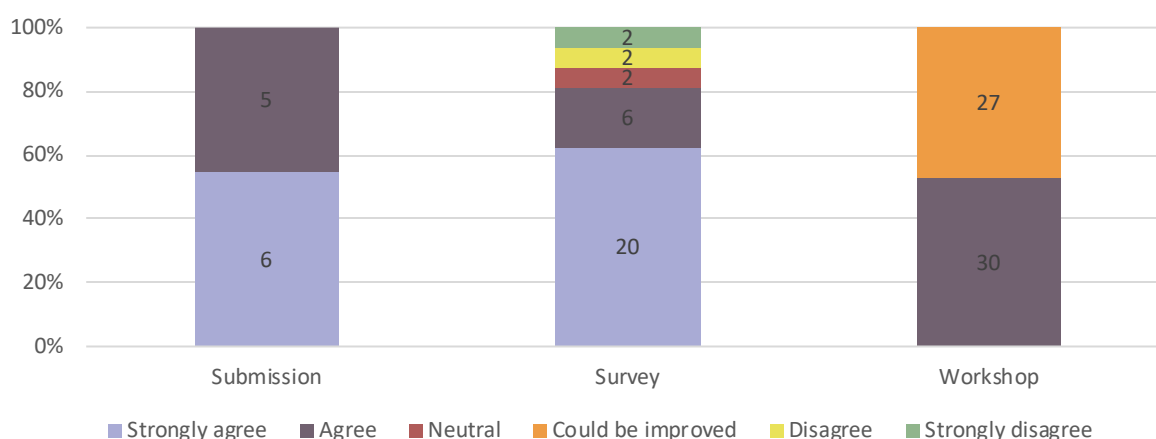


Figure 33: Evaluations of Action 6.2

Most comments in this Action related to proposed extensions of the existing proposed actions. Examples include incorporating methods for collecting baseline data and providing explicit data management standards.

For the 100-priority spp. and (ECs) should establish monitoring protocol (if it doesn't already exist), to ensure/provide a baseline from which to measure impact of TSS2 (Workshop participant)

Following this, as with Action 6.1, many comments in this area also referred to the approach for implementing this Action. These focused particularly on the prioritisation approach for acquiring baseline data. Some respondents noted the need to link baseline data to monitoring, to ensure that existing baseline data is utilised, and that the acquisition of baseline data should not be prioritised above on-the-ground threat reduction. Following this, many respondents gave suggestions of how to integrate this Action with organisations that already have baseline data or are in the process of acquiring it:

\$50 million bushfires program, a lot of universities are collecting baseline data, across small places and larger places at a state level (Workshop participant)

6.3 Mechanisms for improved data sharing

Half of all survey respondents expressed strong agreement with Action 6.3, as did half of the workshop participants. Like Actions 6.1 and 6.2, the only expression of disagreement came from survey respondents. In total, 67% of all responses to this question were either agreement or strong agreement (Figure 34). Only six

submissions specifically stated their level of agreement with this Action, all of which were either in strong agreement (n = 2) or agreement (n = 4).

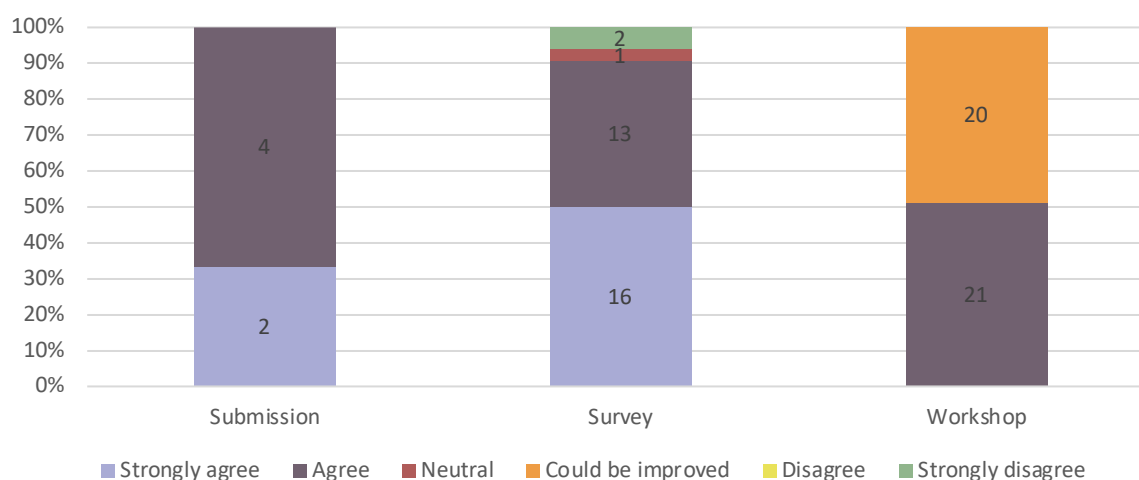


Figure 34: Evaluations of Action 6.3

Unlike Action 6.1 and 6.2, most comments provided by respondents relating to Action 6.3 referred to the need to integrate this Action across jurisdictions and organisations. Many suggestions for integration were made, including using national BDR for field ecological measurements and observations, linking in with AU Nature Hub or ALA as well as national level instruments such as the EPBC Reform Pathway:

The EPBC Reform Pathway offers opportunity to improve standardising and centralising of data collection - as per recommendations in Chapter 10 of Professor Samuel's EPBC Act Review Report and Appendix B4 National Environment Standard for Data and Information. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission).

There was crossover between integration and collaboration in some comments related to Action 6.3. For example, one participant highlighted the need to coordinate with major institutions and publishers, while other participants noted challenges around data sharing, such as maintaining data integrity, establishing levels of authority over the data, consideration of data storage issues as well as intellectual and cultural property rights.

Numerous suggestions for extending the proposed actions were given. These included creating guidelines and agreements for data sharing, including citizen science data and additional projects focusing on resolving taxonomy or population genetics.

This needs to address integration of threatened species / habitat data into high-level proposal scoping and local government development assessment (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission).

6.4 Tackling knowledge gaps

While this Action had the least support among respondents among Action Area 6, 63% of responses expressed either strong agreement or agreement. Just over half of survey and submission respondents were in strong agreement, while just over half of workshop participants suggested improvements to this Action. The six submissions responses were equally split between agreement and strong agreement (Figure 35).

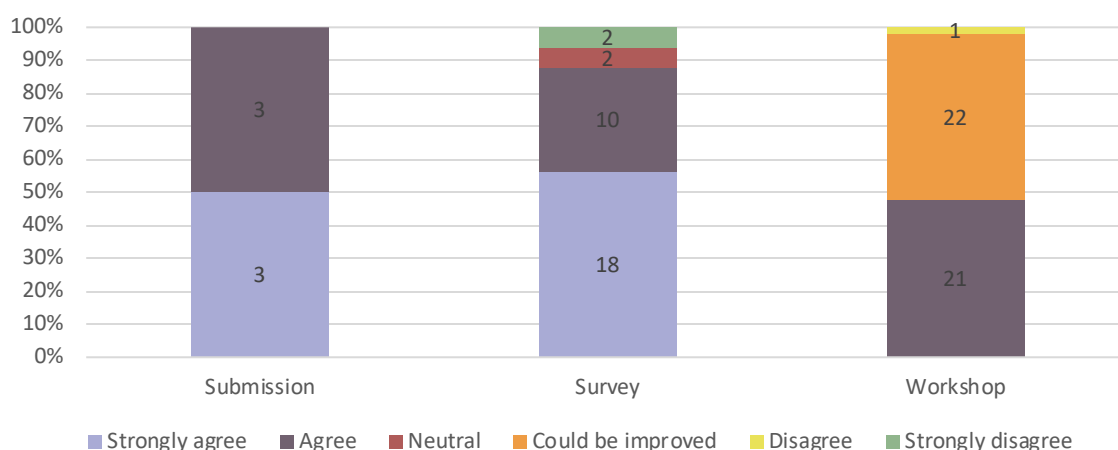


Figure 35: Evaluations of Action 6.4

The majority of comments related to how to implement the proposed actions. Similar to comments on other components of Action Area 6, respondents queried how knowledge gaps would be prioritised, how filling these knowledge gaps can be balanced with the need for urgent on-the-ground actions and how to incorporate other stakeholders in the process.

Perpetual need to bring landholders understanding along on the journey and relate the science to impacts on them/their farm etc (Workshop participant)

Several workshop participants and submitters gave suggestions for extending the proposed actions, whether through additional actions or injections of funding:

One of the activities under Action 6.4 is to establish and deliver a research plan to address identified knowledge gaps. We strongly recommended that this plan is accompanied by appropriate funding to kickstart the research plan. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Survey)

6.5 Developing and deploying new tools and technology

This final action in Action Area 6 had the highest level of support. A total of 71% of all responses to this question stated strong agreement or agreement with the proposed actions and Action 6.5. Survey respondents had a high level of strong agreement, while over half of all workshop participants expressed agreement (Figure 36). Two thirds of submission responses expressed agreement.

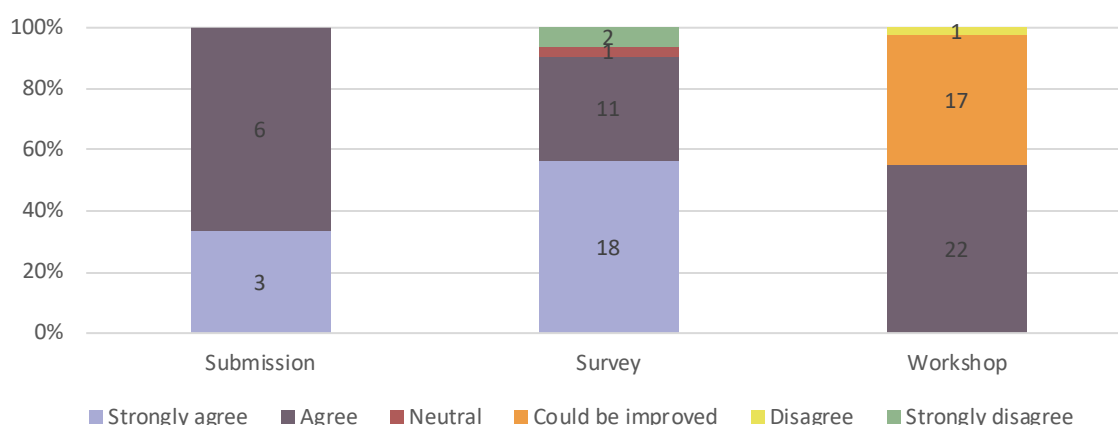


Figure 36: Evaluations of Action 6.5

Again, the most common suggestion regarding this Action regarding the approach for implementation.

Agree - with a caveat. As mentioned above, it is important not to re-invent the wheel just for the sake of doing it. New tools should be identified as needed, be more effective than current ones and must be able to integrate into current knowledge and databases. (Private Citizen, Survey)

Following this, many workshop participants made suggestions for extending the proposed actions in Action 6.5. These included creating tools for supporting investment decisions, incorporating 'Environment-Economic Accounting' and considering the role of breakthrough, novel genetic tools and technologies.

Other actions

Participants suggested over 40 additional actions for Action Area 6. Many of these related to the need to inventory and/or develop centralised data storage facilities, data standards and governance frameworks. A number of respondents suggested incorporating additional projects such as citizen science activities and databases, while others suggested integrating Action Area 6 activities with other legislation such as National Environmental Standards.

Our primary recommendation for this action area is: Develop a data, knowledge and tools framework that enables organisations to incorporate traditional, Indigenous and citizen science data to threatened species initiatives in an integrated manner. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Indicators to measure 'success' prior to management interventions
- Appropriate data standards.
- A National bycatch register
- Review of existing data and past programs
- A Threatened Species open source/public data portal
- Data sharing agreements/policies
- Community engagement, support and assistance to citizen science projects.

SMART targets

Twelve comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 6. A number of these were not necessarily related to this Action Area and did not nominate indicators specifically related to Knowledge and tools. One respondent noted the difficulty in setting SMART targets for this Action Area, instead suggesting that procedural targets related to projects could include incorporation of MERI processes, lodging data in an accessible repository with appropriate meta-data, and utilising clear decision processes that provide opportunities for evaluation data.

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- By 2031, Australia's Threatened Species Index (accessible at: <https://tsx.org.au/>) shows increasing multi-species trends for Australia's threatened and near-threatened birds, mammals and plants.
- Agreement to adopt some universal standards by the end of this Action Plan
- By 2026, a nationally coordinated system of data acquisition, monitoring, mapping and reporting is developed and providing information on variances to outcomes and targets and to informing actions to mitigate any variances.
- By 2026, administration and approval processes are in place that ensure local actions and decisions contribute to achieving regional and national outcomes for priority species and places.

2.10 Action Area 7: Forging stronger partnerships

Maintaining and building partnerships across all stakeholders will deliver better coordination of action and complementarity of effort. Three actions were proposed in this Area; the first being strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the remaining two seeking innovative approaches to financing and collaboration to achieve conservation objectives.

Of the three Action Areas, 7.1 received the highest percentage of support, with all submission and most survey respondents expressing strong agreement or agreement. Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for the approach, a most common concern for non-governmental organisations. Suggestions for collaboration were third, while concerns around funding with fourth (Figure 37).

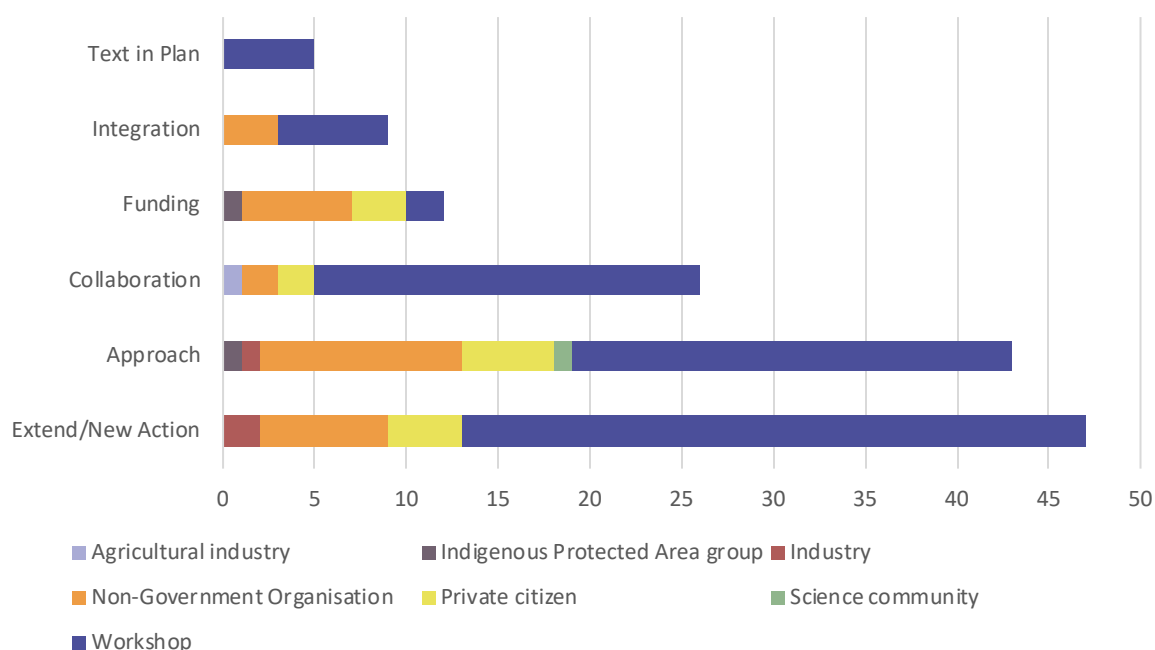


Figure 37: Overview of Action Area 7 comment categories by respondent type

Numerous survey and submission comments suggested fruitful and productive approaches to this Action Area, most particularly regarding strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders and providing examples where these partnerships have succeeded in the past.

In Indigenous culturally important places, Traditional Owner Corporations and Indigenous leaders should be invited to lead the development of plans and mechanisms to support their aspirations for protecting country and culture. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

The workshop respondents focused priority on identifying areas for collaborations, including Indigenous knowledge in conservation planning, and developing governance frameworks for creating good partnerships, which may then also help incentivise improved land management practices. Many comments in this Action Area were interrelated. For example, one workshop participant suggested extending/creating a new action which would also facilitate funding pathways:

Establish an independently governed funding entity for initiatives that are difficult for government to fund directly (e.g., detection and reporting of land clearing) (Workshop participant)

7.1 Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Action 7.1 had the highest level of support across Action Area 7, with 72% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement. Only one survey respondent expressed strong disagreement, while 20 workshop comments suggested improvements to the Action (Figure 38). Of the 12 submissions responses, eight expressed strong agreement.

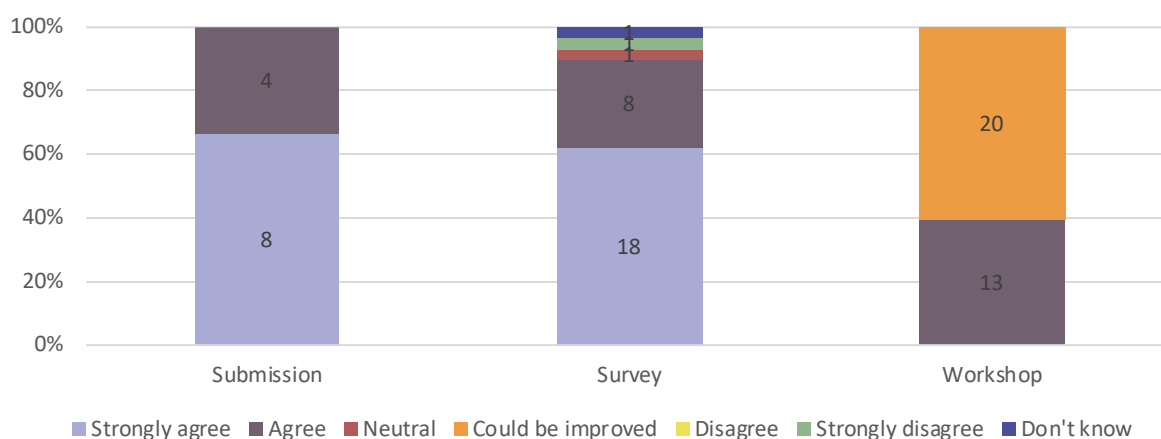


Figure 38: Evaluations of Action 7.1

The most common suggestion made regarding Action 7.1 concerned the approach to implementation. Suggestions were made regarding suitable guidelines for undertaking engagement of Indigenous Australians, such as ensuring free, informed consent and prior consultation, supporting leadership by community-based land conservation organisations, and recognising rights to use biodiversity. Other respondents noted that existing work can be built on, including effective collaborations and areas where partnerships could be strengthened.

State government (eg. QLD DES engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait rangers to undertake wildlife management)) has strong partnerships with Indigenous groups, so can indirectly achieve part of 7.1 through building, fostering, or strengthening these relations through other partnerships (Workshop participant)

7.2 Promote, facilitate, and support the use of innovative financing and co-funding (market-based solutions)

Although Action 7.1 still received support, with 63% of responses either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the Action, it received the lowest support of the three Actions in Action Area 7. This is primarily due to survey respondents, three of whom expressed disagreement with the Action and one of whom expressed strong disagreement. Conversely all submissions which responded to this question expressed agreement or strong agreement (Figure 39).

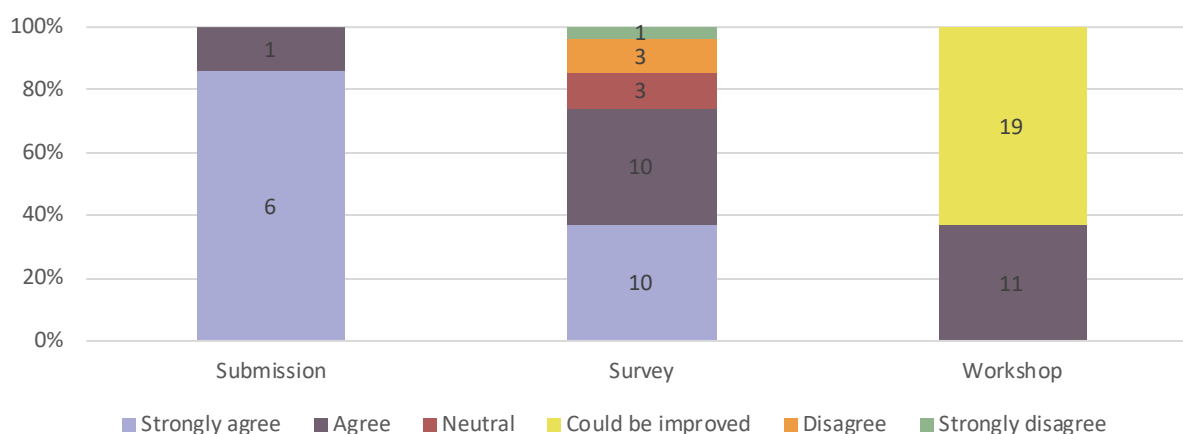


Figure 39: Evaluations of Action 7.2

Unlike responses to Action 7.1 which primarily focused on approaches, the most common response to Action 7.2 were suggestions for extending the existing activities. These included adding several additional market-based solutions including crowdfunding, eco-tourism and citizen-science tourism. In addition, respondents suggested looking to international funding and other options such as public/private partnerships. While the focus of responses to this Action was on extensions, a number of respondents also highlighted the importance of positive and meaningful support of existing projects and alliances could enhance action in this area.

Working with the agricultural sector is not just about addressing barriers to financing it is about finding areas where the goals of conservation of priority species can be aligned with environmentally responsible food production (Agricultural industry, Survey)

7.3 Promote and support partnerships with private conservation land and water managers

Action 7.3 received a high level of support, with 70% of responses either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the Action. While three survey respondents expressed disagreement ($n = 2$) or strong disagreement ($n = 1$), twenty other survey respondents expressed strong agreement. A total of 17 workshop comments were made suggesting areas where the Action could be improved (Figure 40). One of the eight submissions which expressed their level of support chose 'neutral' for this Action.

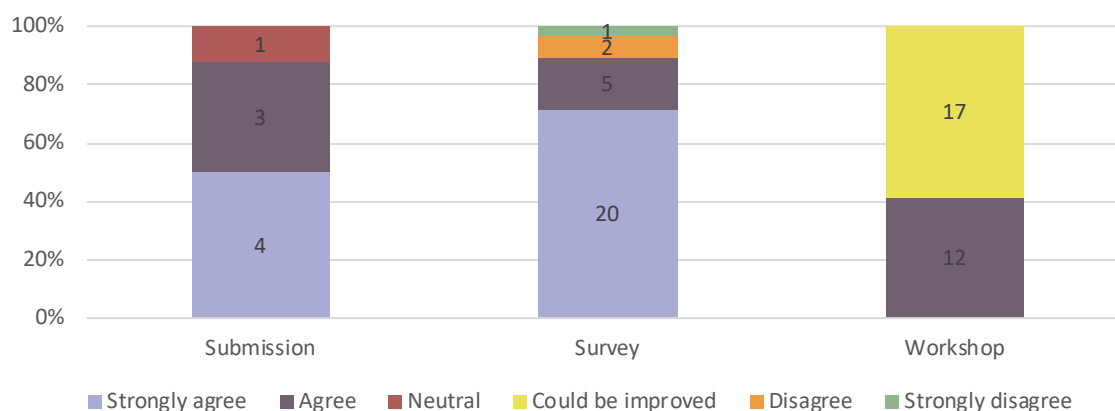


Figure 40: Evaluations of Action 7.3

Action 7.3 received comments related equally to collaboration, funding, the approach, and suggested extensions. Some respondents suggested deeper collaborations with universities, non-governmental organisations and RDCs such as Australian Wool Innovation. Some of these suggestions also related to maximising funding opportunities:

Encourage regions, groups, councils, organisations, etc to partner up on bigger funding applications. This improves efficiencies of scale and reduces neighbouring groups/regions from both doing the same thing or reinventing the wheel (Workshop participant).

Possible extensions to the Action included adding coordinators to facilitate partnerships and extending the reach of this Action to outside the protected area estate. Finally, funding was seen as a critical element of this Action and intrinsically linked with successful implementation:

Agree that collaboration and partnerships need investment. Investors increasingly want shovel-ready collaborative on-ground projects - these take resources to bring to the point of being investment ready. Capacity building resources from for phase 1 can have terrific return on investment by preparing phases 2, 3, 4 for private investment (Workshop participant)

Other actions

Most responses to this Action Area appeared to suggest extensions to the existing Actions, rather than new Actions. Over 10 new actions were suggested, by a mix of workshop, submission, and survey respondents. They were primarily focused on Action 7.1 and 7.2, with proposals such as developing IP protocols, developing governance frameworks and reinstating past successful programs:

[We] recommend that the former NRS co-investment funding model be re-instated, as it demonstrably increased the formal protected area estate across all land tenures while it operated and leveraged substantial non-governmental funding in doing so. This could be incorporated into the creation of an Australian major trust fund (see Recommendation 4 above) or be established as a stand-alone funding program. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Engage with the tourism sector to identify the value of threatened species to tourism and innovative models to enable tourism to contribute to threatened species initiatives
- Create a national community engagement strategy to support conservation including co-management with traditional owners
- Review and revise the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement to accommodate impacts and responses across environmental, social and economic values
- Formalise/develop a governance framework for building good projects.

SMART targets

Only two comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 7. A third respondent suggested a range of criteria which could be used to inform SMART targets:

This could be made of a number of factors; The amount/number of priority stakeholders engaged with, Positive alignment of those stakeholders with conservation goals, Actions that stakeholders have taken because of this engagement, The impact of that action on the environment, The return on the invested time and effort in that stakeholder relationship. Ultimately the number of positive stakeholder actions on priority species and areas. (Agricultural Industry, Survey)

Suggested SMART Targets

- By 2025, the Office of the Threatened Species Commissioner has established a network with all threatened species managing eNGOs, NRMs, citizen science groups, industry partners, community groups and academic institutions. Threatened Species management now happens in a coordinated way and data on progress is recorded in a shared central repository.
- A formalised conservation agreement with state or federal government for each recognised Traditional Owner Group be in place by the end of this Action Plan.

2.11 Action Area 8: Community leadership and engagement

The proposed actions for this action area received a very high level of support across all participants. Action 8.2 received the highest level of agreement and strong agreement (79%), while only one survey respondent expressed strong disagreement (with Action 8.1) and one survey respondent expressed disagreement (with Action 8.2). Across this Action Area six different general comment categories were identified. The most common of these were suggestions for extending/creating new actions. Following this were suggestions for approaching the implementation of the Action Area, closely followed by suggestions for integrating the Action Areas across jurisdictions and suggestions for collaboration (Figure 41).

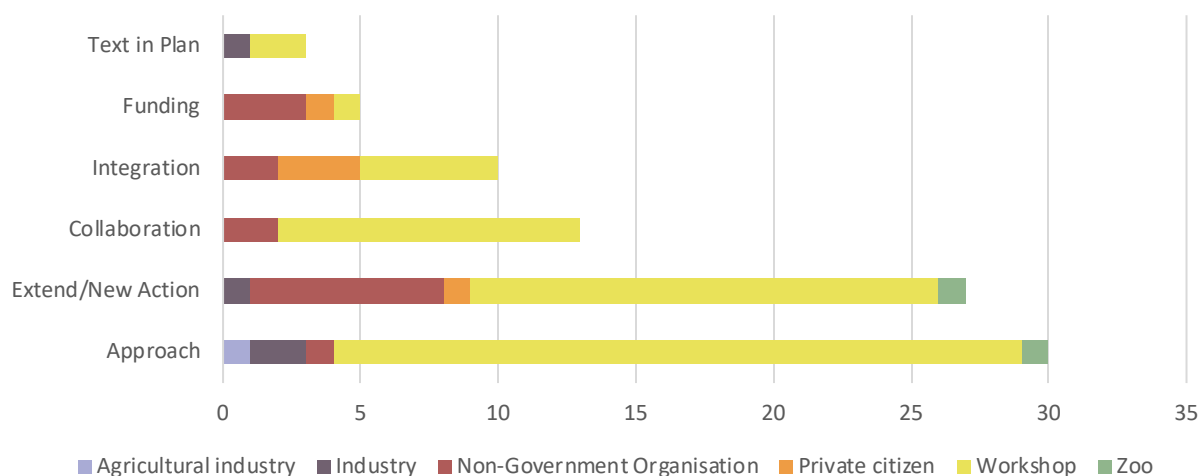


Figure 41: Overview of Action Area 8 comment categories by respondent type

Survey and submission respondents commended the support for inclusion of school, local leadership and community engagement. Most comments, however, related to the need to include more than just schools, and to provide funding and resourcing such as the provision of regional threatened species coordinators.

It is important that these actions ensure that community groups, schools and organisations are linked in with relevant experts to help guide actions (particularly around revegetation work for example). Whilst there is no doubt always the right intention, sometimes without guidance the intended outcome is not achieved. Volunteered time is such an asset, that it would pay here to ensure that there is a well-developed framework of support to deliver priority actions. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)

Workshop responses also highlighted the need to support local leadership, as well as empowering Indigenous communities, local governments, and the business sector. Many workshop respondents noted that capitalizing on existing assets and platforms such as zoos and NGOs would be helpful, however clarification of their roles and responsibilities would be beneficial.

8.1 Outreach – communications and engagement

In total 72% of responses indicated agreement with Action 8.1. Only one survey participant strongly disagreed with the action, and one survey participant was neutral. Of the workshop participants just under half indicated agreement with the action while the remaining workshop evaluations were suggestions for improvement (Figure 42). Six of the eight submissions expressed strong agreement.

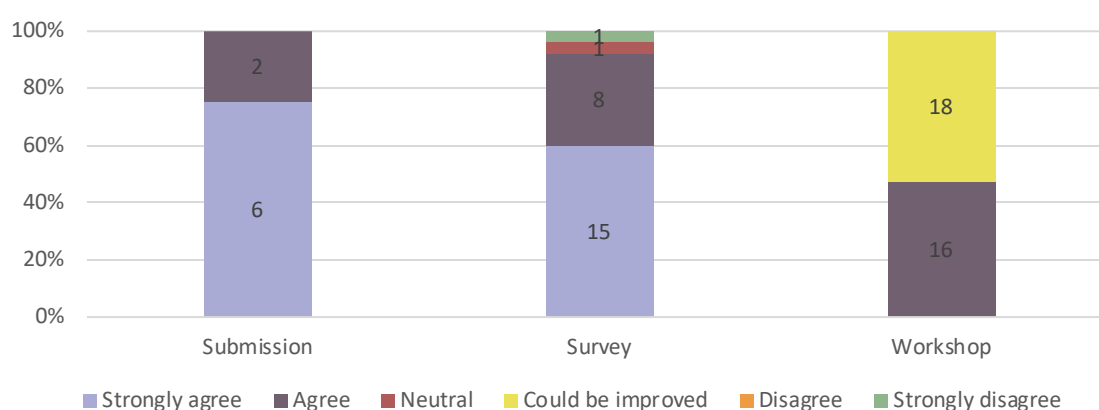


Figure 42: Evaluations of Action 8.1

Just under half of the comments made by participants regarding Action 8.1 related to the implementation approach. For example, one workshop participant noted:

"[We] need specific programs and actions to communicate info, best practice and how to get involved. This area is often tacked onto projects as an afterthought, but it is very important and should be targeted to key audiences. Also, behaviour change [is needed]. As a result, communication and engagement should be measured and used to adapt future engagement" (Workshop participant)

Some comments related to the need to integrate this action area across jurisdictions, sectors or networks. These included utilising existing organisations such as NRM groups, coordinating with the NGO sector, strengthening existing community networks and enhancing Traditional Owners' decision-making authority. One workshop comment highlighted the need for dedicated funding for communication and engagement with schools, while two comments recommended changes to the report text and structure; 1) include the word 'places' along with 'species' in Action 8.1, and 2) move the engagement action from 1.2 Myrtle Rust into this section.

"Highly support this action area. I think this will be key for protected places. The text here notes species, but I think we can also note the role for protected places." (Workshop participant)

8.2 Community leadership

Action Area 2 was also strongly supported by workshop, survey, and submission participants. All submissions that stated their level of support for the action were either in strong agreement or agreement. Only one participant did not agree with this action area, while most survey participants expressed strong agreement. Over half of workshop participants agreed with Action 8.2 (Figure 43).

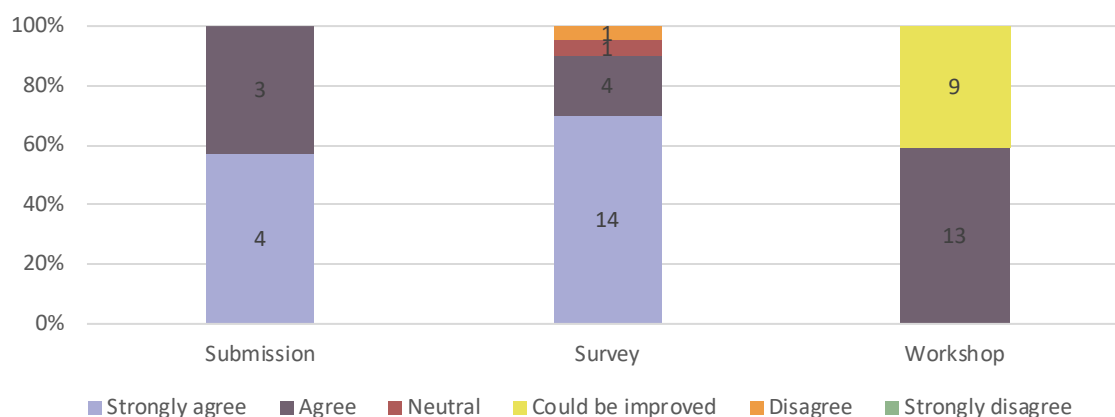


Figure 43: Evaluations of Action 8.2

There were 33 comments made across all participants related to Action 8.2. Seven focused again on the approach, primarily highlighting the need to actively focus engagement on local groups as well as elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.

Obviously elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in this space would be very welcomed and a good start. (Workshop participant).

Three comments stressed the need for funding: one for resourcing volunteer coordination, one for Traditional Owners and one for community groups. Six comments considered the need to integrate communication and leadership work across groups, government portfolios and regional planning processes. One submitter suggested linking community leadership to other actions across the Plan.

Other actions

Participants suggested 22 additional actions or extensions for existing actions in this Action Area. Of these, five were provided by submitters, five from survey participants and 17 from workshop participants. Many of the suggested extensions to actions and new actions involved specific programs which could be developed, that focussed on communication and education such as:

Establish regional threatened species coordinators to assist with development and implementation of regional conservation plans, including community (particularly Indigenous peoples) engagement in design, monitoring and implementation. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Survey).

Example Suggested Additional Actions

- Threatened Species Ambassadors
- Establish regional coordinators
- Develop Threatened Species recovery awards
- Initiating a monthly NESP-led TED talk program
- National education program by 2025
- Citizen science frameworks
- Forums to foster community engagement
- Information for community groups and Local government

SMART targets

Only four comments related to possible SMART targets for Action Area 8. One of these suggested duplicating the targets from the New Zealand Biosecurity 2025 Plan. The others nominated indicators, however, these all implied particular approaches to leadership and engagement which may not be appropriate once the actions have been agreed and an evaluation plan developed.

Example Suggested SMART Targets

- All targeted threatened species have active community involvement to implement recovery actions and community representation on recovery teams
- By 2026, regional threatened species coordinators are established within NRM regions or across bioregions
- By 2025, every Australian knows about Australia's threatened species and takes action to reduce the pressures on species and habitat

2.12 Additional priority species

Respondents were asked to nominate species, currently listed as threatened under the EPBC Act, that they would like considered to be included under the Action Plan and to explain why they feel the species is important. Some respondents offered multiple suggestions, covering a very wide range of species. In total, 109 additional species were suggested by respondents, however a small number of these referred to categories of species (e.g., 'inshore dolphins', and 'sea turtles').

In total 109 species were nominated. Of these, 96 were nominated only once. The following list indicates which species were nominated by two or more respondents.

Recommended Additional Species	Number of respondents who nominate this priority species
Spectacled Flying Fox (<i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>)	7
Carnaby's Black Cockatoo (<i>Calyptorhynchus latirostris</i>)	4
Australian Sea Lion (<i>Neophoca cinerea</i>)	3
Baudin's Black Cockatoo (<i>Calyptorhynchus baudinii</i>)	3
Grey-headed Flying Fox (<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>)	3
Sawfish (<i>Pristis</i> sp.)	3
Dibbler (<i>Parantechinus apicalis</i>)	2
Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (<i>Calyptorhynchus banksii naso</i>)	2
Hawksbill Turtle (<i>Eretmochelys imbricate</i>)	2
Koala (NSW, QLD and ACT populations)	2
Platypus (<i>O. anatinus</i>)	2
Striped Legless Lizard (<i>Delma impar</i>)	2
Western Ground Parrot (<i>Pezoporus flaviventris</i>)	2

2.13 Additional priority places

Across submission responses a total of 15 priority places were nominated by seven different submitters. Detailed rationales for these recommendations were given, with some submitters noting that their organisations had recently completed assessments to identify large landscapes for protection. The Wet Tropics was nominated three times by three different submitters; once when referred to as a bioregion, and once specifically regarding the lowland tropical rainforest of the region.

Recommended Priority Places	Number of respondents who nominated this priority place
Wet Tropics Bioregion (and specifically Lowland Tropical Rainforest of the Wet Tropics Bioregion)	3
Albany City to Waychinicup Coastal Complex	1
Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub	1
Esperance Coastal Reserve Complex	1
Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt	1
Far North Queensland Rainforest and Woodland ecosystems	1
Fitzgerald Biosphere to Stirling Range National Park Complex	1
Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area	1
Grey Box (Eucalyptus microcarpa) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia	1
King Island	1
Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain	1
Natural Temperate Grassland of the South Eastern Highlands	1
The Murray Scroll Belt IBRA sub-region on the Murray River floodplain	1
The Northern Plains landscape from Echuca to Swan Hill	1
Threatened Ecological Communities in agricultural landscapes	1

In addition, survey respondents and a small number of submission respondents considered the question regarding the appropriate scale for priority places. Figure 44 presents their suggestions. Some submitters noted the difficulty of responding to this question:

This is very much dependent on the number of priority places selected. If, as currently suggested, only 20 priority places are identified, then [we would recommend] b) 'larger scale for broader benefits across a landscape' and must hope that the important small-scale areas are picked up through priority actions for the priority threatened species. However, as outlined below it is recommended that this number be increased to at least one per NRM region across the country. (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission).

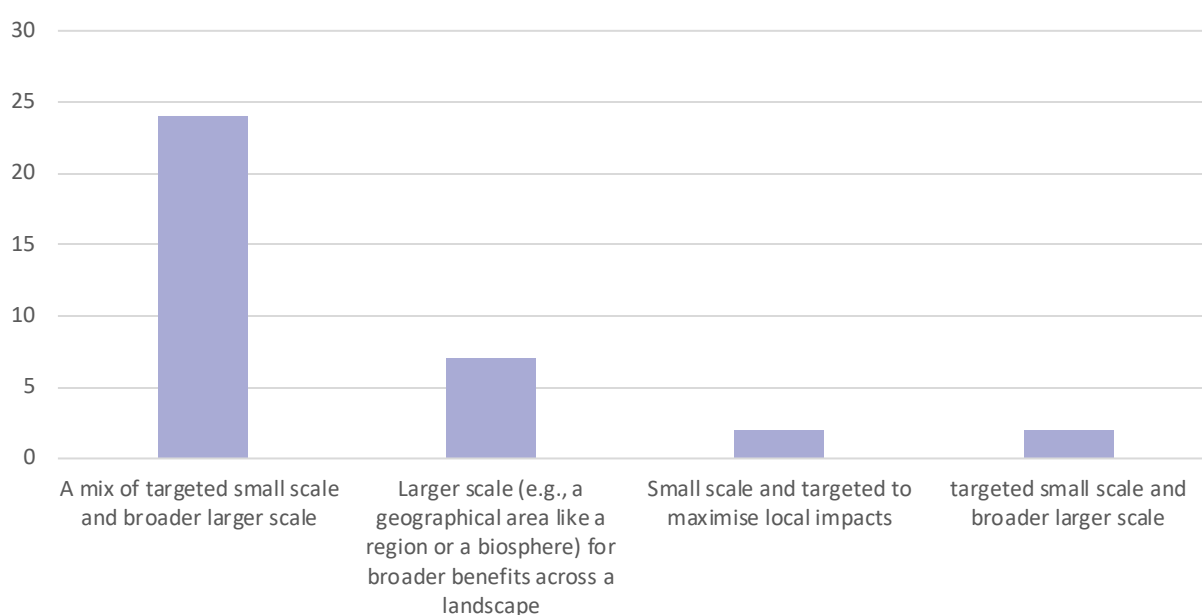


Figure 44: Survey respondents' selection of the appropriate scale for priority places

2.14 Actions and targets

Comments from the workshops, survey and submissions regarding new actions has been presented in the Action Area reports. Survey participants were also asked to rate their agreement with the actions and targets posed on page 20 on the proposed Strategy:

Priority species

- Determine best estimate for population and distribution for all priority species for 2021 (Strategy baseline year).
- Identify key actions for each priority species that will have most impact on recovery.
- Identify relevant measures of success to assess recovery for each priority species after five years, ten years and longer term.

Priority places

- Establish 2021 condition of each priority place (Strategy baseline year).
- Identify key actions to improve the condition.
- Identify relevant measures of success for improving condition after five years, ten years and longer term.

A total of 31 survey respondents answered this question, with just over two thirds agreeing with the proposed actions and targets (Figure 45).

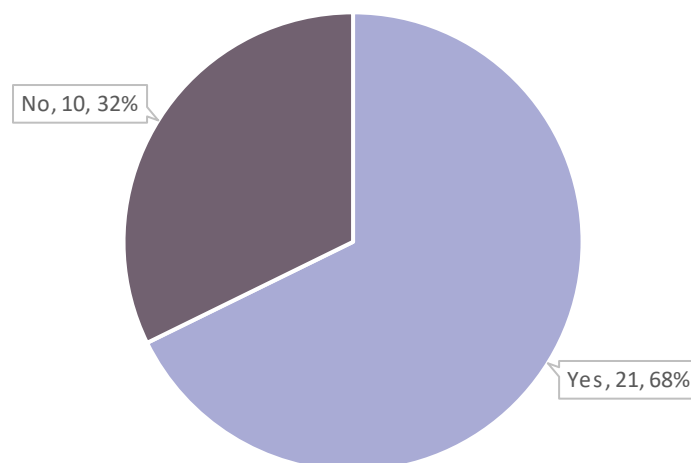


Figure 45: Evaluations of the proposed actions and targets

Survey respondents were also able to make suggestions for actions and targets. Ten survey respondents chose to do this. Some respondents highlighted again the challenge of achieving targets in a short time frame. Others argued that better definitions of words such as 'improving trajectories' is required, or that a broader habitat approach is required instead of species prioritisation. Others stressed the need to incorporate actions already underway:

It will be important to distinguish between existing actions and new actions that originate from the Action Plan. Without doing this, it will be difficult or impossible to properly evaluate the true impact of the Threatened Species Strategy. For instance, if 50 of the 100 priority species are already being managed using 'key actions' identified under the Strategy, then the Year 2 target will have been met by default without any extra effort or investment (Non-Governmental Organisation, Survey)

Some submission respondents also commented on this question. Two respondents expressed concern around the possibility of achieving targets in very short timelines. Other respondents suggested creating a system model for each priority species to inform achievable targets, or engage in a consultation process:

A dedicated consultative process would be helpful for setting SMART targets for new and established invasive threats. The best scientific information available is needed to ensure they are specific and measurable. To ensure they are also achievable, realistic, and time-bound it may be necessary to cross-check the assumptions within the Theory of Change logic and the activities being proposed (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission).

2.15 Prioritisation principles

The final section of the survey asked respondent to select the most important principal to be used to select a priority place. Twenty-nine survey respondents answered this question, with the most favoured principle being ‘Multiple Benefits’ (Figure 46).

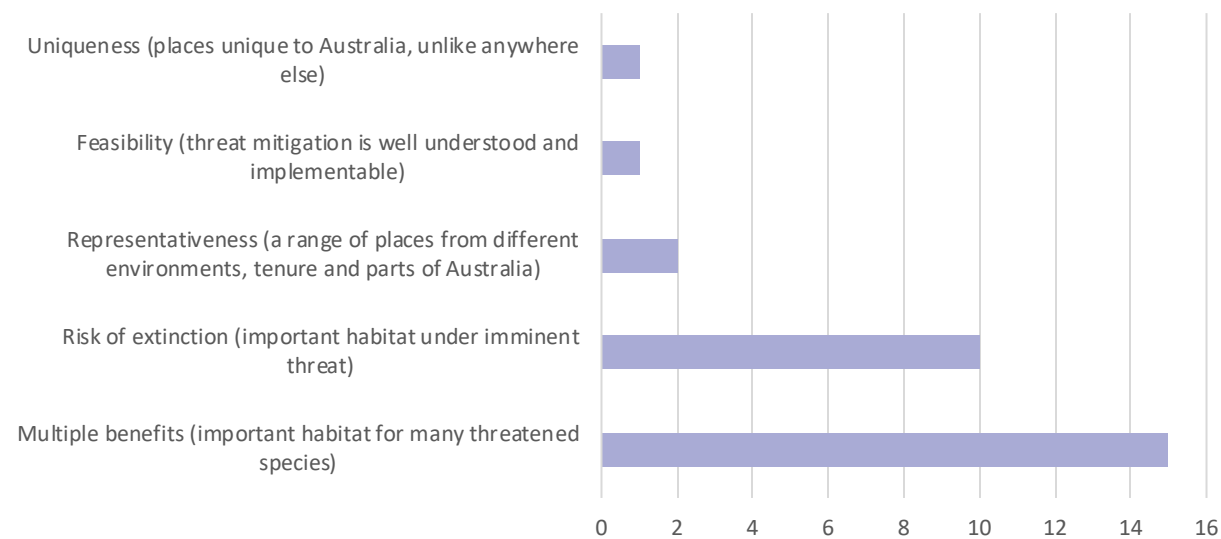


Figure 46: Survey respondents' choice of most important prioritisation principle

A small number of submission responses also considered this question. While some suggested that each of the six principles were important and required in conversations about protecting threatened species, others more broadly welcomed the use of a multi-criteria decision analysis.

[Our organisation] supports the multi-decision analysis to choose the priority 100 species and 20 places and the six criteria that has been chosen (risk of extinction, multiple benefits, feasibility and effectiveness, importance to people, uniqueness, and representativeness). We place the most weight species threat and species functionality, including key stone and umbrella species (Non-Governmental Organisation, Submission)



Attachment 1. Have Your Say—Survey content
template

Have Your Say—Survey content template

General settings

Survey title (maximum 1 line): Scoping the new Threatened Species Strategy's first Action Plan 2021-2026

Participation type (select 1):

- ☐ Anyone
- ☐ Anyone with an email address and screen name
- ☒ Registered participants only

If registered participants only, choose a submission limit:

- ☒ Single submission (registered user can only make 1 submission)
- ☐ Multiple submission (registered user can make more than 1 submission)

If registered participants only, display message to participants who have previously submitted:

You have already responded. You cannot take this survey more than once. Thank you for your response.

Text on survey button:

- ☒ Take survey

Rename survey tab (optional):

Welcome message

Welcome. We invite you to share your feedback via this survey. You can use this online survey to answer questions, upload a submission, or both.

Before you take the survey please read the Threatened Species Strategy – Action Plan Consultation Paper.

Submissions close on 26 July 2021.

2.16 Section 2: Survey structure and questions

Survey structure

Select either or both options:

- ☒ **Ask specific questions, including free text responses**
- ☒ **Let the stakeholder upload a written submission**

Questions

About you

1. What is your post-code?
2. Are you giving feedback on behalf of an organisation or as a private citizen? [radio buttons]

~ Private citizen

~ Organisation

[Condition: if Q2 is 'Organisation', show Q3]

3. Please select the categories that best represent you or your organisation?

- ☐ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- ☐ Commonwealth Agency
- ☐ Local or State Government
- ☐ Non-Government Organisation
- ☐ Zoo
- ☐ Science community
- ☐ University
- ☐ Land manager
- ☐ Agricultural industry
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ General public
- ☐ Other

[Conditional. If 'other' allow free text response]

4. Would you like to give us your contact details to be associated with your comments?

~ Yes

~ No

[If Q4 is 'Yes' show Q5]

5. Please provide your name, or the name of your organisation [single line answer]

6. Would you like to give us your email?

~ Yes

~ No

[If 'Yes' show Q7]

7. Please provide your email [email]

About the survey

8. Do you want to: [check boxes – can select one only]

- answer questions
- upload your own submission

9. Have you read the Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan: Consultation Paper [Yes or No]

[Condition: if Q8 includes 'answer questions' respondents were provided with instructions below as an introduction to the survey followed by Q10 to 19]

The questions in the survey align with the structure of the Action Plan 2021-2026 Consultation Paper. The headings listed below correspond with the section headings included in this paper.

You can choose to answer only questions related to the sections of most interest to you. You don't need to answer all questions in a section. We recommend reading the consultation paper first, so you can ensure your feedback matches the relevant section.

When you make a selection, the survey will direct you to the specific questions of interest to you.

Sections 1- 8 will include a question about setting SMART targets against each Action Area. SMART targets are Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, Time bound. These targets will help us plan investments and activities, help projects to stay focused and also help track progress and performance toward meeting the objectives of the Threatened Species Strategy.

For example, the first Threatened Species Strategy set a SMART target that 'By 2020, feral cat eradication will be underway on five identified islands.' The survey provides options for you to suggest SMART targets for each action area and for priority species and places.

10. Do you have any general feedback about the Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan: Consultation Paper? This is not mandatory.

11. Please select the sections where you would like to provide feedback.

[Condition: Check boxes –provide option to narrow questions to specific sections].

- Action Area 1: Mitigating new and established threats
- Action Area 2: Conserving, restoring and improving habitat
- Action Area 3: Emergency preparedness and response
- Action Area 4: Climate change adaptation and resilience
- Action Area 5: Effective planning for conservation
- Action Area 6: Knowledge and tools
- Action Area 7: Forging stronger partnerships
- Action Area 8: Community leadership and engagement
- Priority species
- Priority places
- Setting targets for priority species and places

Action Areas related questions: For each of the 8 Action Areas and related proposed actions set out in the consultation paper the survey repeat the following questions, modelled for Action Area 1 - below:

12. Action Area 1: Mitigating new and established threats

You can read about the proposed actions under the *mitigating new and established threats action area* section of the consultation paper.

- a. Do you agree with the **proposed actions** under the *mitigating new and established threats action area*? [Scale response for each area of focus]
- 1.1 Invasive predator management - Feral cats and foxes *[select] Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, I don't know*
 - 1.2 Myrtle rust *[select] Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, I don't know*

- 1.3 Invasive grasses *[select] Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, I don't know*
- b. If you disagree for any of the above, please tell us why.
- c. Are there other actions you recommend under this Action Area? *[Check boxes]*
 - Yes
 - No

[Condition: If Yes – add option for text response c. and add Question d.]

If yes – then please provide detail on one additional action [text]and

- d. Do you consider this additional action to be - *[Select] equally important, more important or less important*] than the actions listed above.
- e. Please provide your feedback on what you believe we could set as a SMART target to drive ambition for the *mitigating new and established threats action area*. [text]

13 -19 Questions repeated for

- Action Area 2: Conserving, restoring and improving habitat
- Action Area 3: Emergency preparedness and response
- Action Area 4: Climate change adaptation and resilience
- Action Area 5: Effective planning for conservation
- Action Area 6: Knowledge and tools
- Action Area 7: Forging stronger partnerships
- Action Area 8: Community leadership and engagement

14. Question: Selecting Priority species

The Action Plan will identify up to 100 priority threatened species from the more than 1,800 species listed as nationally threatened under Australia's national environment law (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*). These nationally threatened species will be scored and ranked in priority order against the new Strategy's 6 prioritisation principles for selecting the priority species to be the focus of specific attention and care over the next 5 years. One of these principles is 'importance to people'. We want to find out more about the nationally threatened species that are most important to the Australian community, and we want to hear from you.

- a. Is there a species currently listed as threatened under the EPBC Act [Link to [SPRAT](#)] that you consider should be included under the Action Plan? Please name this species.
- b. Why do you think this species is important?

15. Question: Selecting Priority places

The Action Plan will identify up to 20 priority places to be the focus of Australian Government investment and effort in threatened species recovery over the next 5 years. You can read more about this process and proposed places for inclusion in the consultation paper.

- a. Should priority places be small scale and targeted to maximise local impacts (e.g., focused on one island or one national park) or at a larger scale (e.g., a geographical area like a region or a biosphere) for broader benefits across a landscape? Should there be a mix?
- b. Considering the 6 prioritisation principles, what is the most important principle that should be used to select a priority place?

16. Question: Setting targets for priority species and places

To help meet the objectives of the new Threatened Species Strategy, actions will be required to assist recovery and targets to measure progress and drive actions will be needed. While some actions will be specific to particular species and places, a number of actions and targets will be common across all species and places. You can read more about these actions and targets on page X of the consultation paper.

- Do you agree with the actions and targets posed in the consultation paper? [Yes or no]
- If not, what alternatives do you suggest?

2.17 Section 3: Privacy and confidentiality

Confidentiality

Is your response confidential? (mandatory field)

Answer options:

- No
- Yes, all of it
- Yes, part of it

Privacy notice

'Personal information' means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

We collect your personal information (as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988*) for the purposes of developing the Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan 2021 - 2026 and related purposes. If you do not provide some or all of the personal information requested, we will be unable to contact you to discuss or respond to your submission.

Personal information may be published on our website, disclosed to parliament, other Australian agencies, persons or organisations where necessary for these purposes, provided the disclosure is consistent with relevant laws, in particular the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your personal information will be used and stored in accordance with the [Privacy Principles](#).

See [our Privacy Policy](#) to learn more about accessing or correcting personal information or making a complaint. Alternatively, phone us on +61 2 6272 3933.

Confirm that you have read and understand this privacy notice. [Checkboxes — mandatory question]

– Yes

Declaration

To be completed by the person submitting the response.

I understand that:

- the Australian Government reserves the right to refuse to publish submissions, or parts of submissions, that contain offensive language, potentially defamatory material or copyright infringing material
- a request may be made under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) for access to my submission, including if it is marked confidential. Such requests will be determined in accordance with provisions of the FOI Act
- if I provide personal information about an individual other than myself, I must make that person aware of the privacy notice in this form and draw their attention to the department's privacy policy
- in lodging this submission, I grant the Commonwealth a permanent, irrevocable, royalty-free world-wide, non-exclusive licence to use, copy, reproduce, adapt, communicate and exploit all or any of the material contained in it
- in lodging a submission, I warrant that to the best of my knowledge, I have not infringed any third-party Intellectual Property Rights.

Confirm that you have read and understand this declaration. [Checkboxes — mandatory question]

– Yes