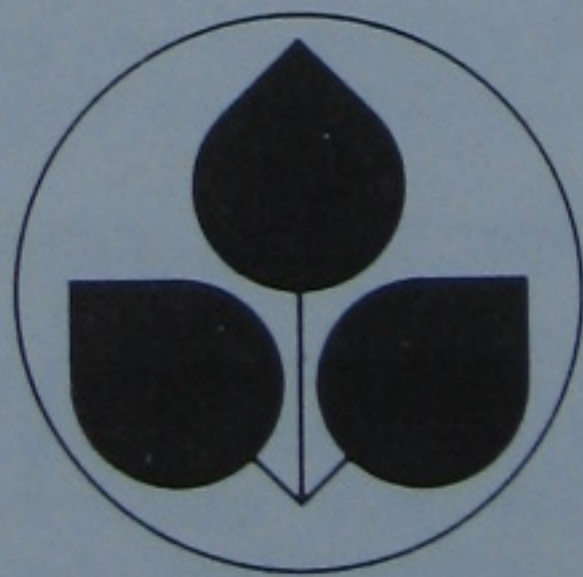


Australian Conservation Foundation
FORWARD PLAN

Adopted at ACF Council Meeting, 8 October 1989



AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
340 Gore Street, Fitzroy, Vic. 3065. Ph. (03) 416 1455

SECTION 2

PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

2.1 PURPOSE

Projections for planet Earth indicate that massive ecological collapse is the inevitable consequence of a continuation of current trends. ACF believes this consequence can and must be averted. In fact, we must repair the damage to our planet and start on a new path to recovery.

This statement of Purpose is ACF's vision for the planet as it moves towards the year 2050. It is this vision of the future which drives the entire Organisation.

Ensure ecological sustainability in which:

- the integrity of the biosphere is maintained;
- a full natural range of genetic, species and environmental diversity is maintained;
- human population numbers and resource use are stabilised;
- environmental and societal planning are integrated and form the basis for economic planning and development;
- the planet's resources are managed in a manner which maximises options for future generations;
- every individual, group, corporation and government recognises the value of human and non-human entities and that balance and harmony in the biosphere are essential to survival of the planet; and
- there is equity and social justice for all.

2.2 ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY PHILOSOPHY

Biosphere

In these Philosophy statements ACF recognises the interdependence of all elements of the biosphere. They indicate that ACF believes conservation, including preservation, is the basis for ecological sustainability in which the evolutionary potential of all species is maintained. All species must have the capacity to survive, adapt, and evolve within a natural environment.

ACF rejects the current concept of a growth economy in favour of a sustainable economy and recognises that the planet's resource base must be conserved in order to achieve ecological sustainability.

1. Ecological sustainability will be achieved.
2. Ecological sustainability will be achieved through mutually beneficial, non-violent behaviour encouraging harmonious relations between humans and with nature, which will require equality, integrity and compassion.

3. Ecological sustainability will be achieved by maintaining the evolutionary potential of all species.
4. Ecological sustainability will maintain the current level of genetic diversity and restore environmental integrity.
5. Reduction and stabilisation of human population numbers and resource usage, both globally and nationally are, fundamental to ecological sustainability.
6. Humans are part of the biosphere and will recognise the intrinsic value of non-human entities.
7. A holistic approach to all strands of the biosphere, including biological, physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural and economic, will be the basis upon which ecological sustainability is built.
8. Resource and energy use will be based as far as possible on renewable resources. The use of non-renewable resources will be prioritised and their use limited.
9. The use of resources or the conduct of activities which pose severe and unmanageable threats to human life or ecological sustainability will be rejected.
10. Redressing the present environmental imbalance through restoration, recovery and conservation of the environment through ecologically sound processes and technology will be essential to achieving ecological sustainability.
11. Material consumption cannot be the only basis upon which quality of life is measured or profitability the key determinant in achieving ecological sustainability. Qualitative not quantitative growth will be the basis for ecological sustainability.
12. Ecological sustainability is a dynamic steady state and is not a static state.

Lifestyle (Conserver Society)

These statements stress the role and responsibility of every individual, group, corporation and government in working to achieve ecological sustainability. They recognise that a sustainable life support system will require substantial social change and that ACF believes it has a leading role to play in creating the climate for change.

13. Each individual, group, corporation and government has a role to play in bringing about social change necessary to achieve ecological sustainability.
14. Ecological sustainability cannot be achieved while industrial and agricultural practices are not sustainable and people do not have the opportunity to maintain sustainable lifestyles.

- 7
15. Ecological sustainability cannot be achieved while people maintain non-sustainable lifestyles and ACF will lead by example.
 16. Public commitment to ecological sustainability will be achieved through an active process of change which leads to more efficient use of resources and the development of sustainable lifestyles.
 17. Effective environmental conservation will be dependent on every individual, group, corporation and government endeavouring to make minimum impact on the natural environment.

2.3 PARTICIPATION PHILOSOPHY

Within ACF

These Philosophy statements indicate that ACF recognises the value of member participation in the Organisation and will encourage people to participate by providing a wide range of opportunities for participation, relevant information and skills development. They also recognise that ACF members have diverse interests and talents and that time and energy will be required to maximise membership potential in moving towards ecological sustainability.

The statements commit ACF to a participatory style of management ensuring that members have the right to participate in decision-making. They acknowledge that this commitment must be balanced against the need for timely decision-making and action.

1. ACF will encourage participation of members in working towards ecological sustainability.
2. ACF will represent the views of its membership and opportunity will be provided for members to contribute to policy development and establishing priorities.
3. Members will have the right to participate in decision-making processes and opportunity will be provided for them to exercise this right. This will balance the desirability of extensive participation with the need for timely decision-making and action.
4. State, Territory, regional and local bodies affiliated with ACF will encourage participation in decision-making within their own areas of responsibility, and will have the right to participate in the development of ACF's national policy.
5. Participation in ACF will reflect the definition of participation as a decision-forming partnership not a decision-making partnership. This allows for extensive input to the Organisation but leaves decision-making in the hands of elected representatives, staff and members within their designated areas of responsibility.

6. ACF will recognise that there are limits to members participation both in terms of the nature of the issue and people's desire to participate.
7. Members will have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge and have access to information to enable them to participate effectively.
8. ACF will recognise that a range of opportunities for participation will be required to cater for its diverse membership.

Within the Community

These statements of Philosophy indicate that ACF believes that ecological sustainability will only be achieved if the broad spectrum of issues which affect sustainability are addressed. They recognise that this is not a task which ACF can tackle in isolation but that it has a role to play, in partnership with other groups in society, to define, articulate and address issues which run counter to sustainability.

The statements also emphasise that ACF believes that it is important to involve and educate children to work towards ecological sustainability.

9. ACF recognises that a range of societal issues affect sustainability and will initiate and participate in broad community debate designed to identify and explain the inter-relationship of these issues and to develop policies for ecological sustainability.
10. ACF will recognise the value and potential of working with the range of groups and organisations across Australia which are working towards ecological sustainability.
11. ACF will recognise that children can play a responsible and participatory role in achieving ecological sustainability and the importance of children adopting a conservation consciousness.

2.4 ACTIVISM PHILOSOPHY

These Philosophy statements recognise that ACF will adopt an activist approach in working towards achieving its Goals. They indicate that ACF staff and members will have the opportunity to develop and extend their activist skills and that the Organisation's structures and processes will encourage and promote appropriate and effective activism.

1. ACF will recognise that activism, which is non-violent, vigorous and imaginative goal-orientated action, is fundamental to ACF's work.
2. ACF recognises the crucial role of activism as a means of achieving its Goals.

3. ACF structures and planning and decision-making processes will facilitate and encourage activism by ACF members and staff.
4. Activism among ACF Members, staff, the broader environment movement and the general public will be encouraged through the development and extension of skills and confidence in this practice.

2.5 CO-OPERATION PHILOSOPHY

Within the Environment Movement

These Philosophy statements recognise that there are a wide range of local, State and national environment groups in Australia and that ACF believes that it has a key role to play in facilitating some form of co-operation between those groups if their potential to influence the future of the planet is to be optimised.

1. National co-operation within the environment movement is required.
2. ACF will actively facilitate processes of consultation regarding the establishment of an effective system of co-operation within the environment movement.
3. ACF's facilitating role will encourage creativity, initiative and diversity across environment groups and promote a planned, co-operative approach to working towards ecological sustainability.
4. ACF recognises that there is a need to avoid duplication and possible waste of limited resources and will draw on the positive attributes of diversity to encourage co-operation between groups working towards common goals.
5. ACF members and other environment groups will have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the co-operative system and have the right to participate in decision-making.

Within ACF

The statements express ACF's commitment to national co-ordination which recognises that unity of purpose can be achieved without limiting creativity and diversity. They stress the importance of communication and information flow throughout the Organisation.

6. National co-ordination within ACF will recognise and respect regional diversity and opportunity will be provided for that diversity to be co-ordinated and optimised at the national level.
7. State, Territory and regional operations will be in accordance with ACF's agreed national goals and standards.

8. ACF will provide its State, Territory and regional bodies with autonomy to respond to and address State and regional issues so long as this is consistent with ACF's national goals, policies and standards.
9. ACF at the national level will provide information to State, Territory and regional bodies regarding global and national issues. State and local bodies will provide information on regional and local issues to the national level.

2.6 THINK GLOBALLY ACT LOCALLY PHILOSOPHY

Networks

These Philosophy statements emphasise that ACF believes that global interaction through networks which facilitate international co-operation and co-ordination is required within the environment movement. They indicate that ACF has a key role to play in linking Australia into those networks. They also stress the need to link local and global perspectives.

1. Working to achieve ecological sustainability requires the integration of local, regional, national and global perspectives.
2. ACF will recognise that it is part of an international network of groups and organisations working towards ecological sustainability and will play a key role in linking Australian groups and issues with the global agenda.
3. ACF will focus its resources on national issues and will facilitate networks across groups at the local, regional, State and global levels.

Information

In these statements ACF recognises the importance of global information sharing. They indicate that ACF is committed to translating, integrating and communicating local and global issues and impacts within the environment movement.

4. ACF will collect and collate information on the relevance and impact of international and national environment issues, disseminate that information to regional and local groups and actively encourage local initiatives and actions on those issues.
5. ACF will work with other environment groups to identify and communicate the national and international impact of local and regional issues.
6. ACF will actively encourage its members to become involved in local events and issues which have a bearing on global sustainability.

7. Opportunities will be provided for sharing of information, knowledge and skills development within the environment movement as a whole.