

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 213  
**Hearing:** Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Programme:** Director of National Parks (DNP)  
**Topic:** World Parks Congress  
**Hansard Page:**  
**Question Date:**  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Urquhart asked:**

1. What were the main, positive outcomes from Australia's hosting of the World parks Congress last year?
2. What was the direct economic benefit to NSW, compared to the pre-event estimate of \$24 million?
3. What are the next steps to carry on from the Congress?

**Answer:**

1. Hosting the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014 enhanced Australia's international reputation as a progressive and effective manager of biodiversity by demonstrating leadership and collaboration with a broad range of public and private stakeholders. Over 60 per cent of the delegates were international, with a remarkable 26 per cent drawn from developing countries. There was also a strong presence of indigenous people from developed countries and youth, each representing seven per cent of delegates.

The Congress increased government, business, and community awareness and support for the key role of protected areas in conserving biodiversity and delivering ecosystem services. Event messaging by the mainstream media reached an audience of 64.5 million globally. The Congress website was accessed by every country in the world (excluding one – Western Sahara).

The event engaged new partners and placed protected areas firmly within broader community and national wellbeing goals. Significantly, six per cent of the delegates did not consider themselves to be part of the protected area sector yet actively participated in Congress sessions and events.

2. The World Parks Congress was a great success, doubling its forecasted attendance. The 6000 delegates who attended the Congress contributed over \$40million<sup>1</sup> to the New South Wales economy.
3. The main legacy output from the Congress is the IUCN's ***Promise of Sydney***, which includes a statement outlining the ambitious agenda to better safeguard the planet's more than 200,000 protected areas in the decade to come, and individual country and organisational pledges to support the achievement of this agenda.

The Australian Government's pledges under the Promise of Sydney form the basis of our legacy statement, and include:

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<sup>1</sup> Business Events Sydney, 11 June 2015.

- AU\$6 million to support Coral Triangle marine protection, AU\$6 million to combat illegal logging across the Asia-Pacific.
- Support to help develop a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly to prevent poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking.
- A ban on capital dredge disposal in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Marine Park and, AU\$700,000 from the AU\$40 million Reef Trust to clean up marine debris across the Great Barrier Reef.
- Ongoing commitment to work with the United Nations General Assembly to protect the biodiversity of the high seas.
- AU\$2 million to boost threatened species protection in national parks, AU\$1.2 million for Bush Blitz, which is an innovative species discovery program borne out of a partnership between the Australian Government, BHP Billiton and Earthwatch Australia, and AU\$100,000 for a new university-led initiative to boost the skills of rangers in Australia and throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Action on these Australian Government pledges has become a divisional responsibility within the department, with lead sections allocated responsibility for advancing each item as part of their core deliverables.