



Earth Charter Australia

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The Earth Charter and Sustainable Rangeland Management

The Earth Charter is an ethical framework of values and principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society. Ecological integrity is covered under Principles 5 to 8:

5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and natural processes that sustain life.
6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.
8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.

There are many sub-principles of the Earth Charter Principles that provide more detailed sustainable management guidelines.

Rangeland Policies

1. Economics significantly impact, mostly negatively, on rangeland management, and therefore economic policies (e.g. taxation, level of debt) need to be reviewed. For example, taxation incentives for cultivation machinery purchase may make crop farming relatively more profitable than grazing and subsequently lead to rangeland degradation.
2. Respect for all biological life requires a major understanding of our native wildlife and the integrated management of wildlife and domesticated animals. Integrated management may require a major change in the 'ownership' of wildlife, so that landowners may 'sustainably harvest' wildlife as part of integrated rangeland management or be paid to sustain wildlife. Sustainable management practices require landowners to effectively manage all grazing animals including wildlife, in this case kangaroos. Landowners will need to become key partners in the management, harvesting and market development of a successful kangaroo products industry. In other words, *wildlife is valued and not considered a pest*.
3. A focused rangeland policy approach is required that relates to the unique ecosystems and landscapes of Australia's Outback: *one policy does not fit all*. A regional approach is needed that engages all stakeholders and influences the policies of state and national bodies in recognising the unique and strategic value of our rangelands.

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4. Water is a major resource for rangeland management. Ensuring a sustainable water supply requires management and research of both above- and below-ground water resources, and *when knowledge is limited, apply a pre-cautionary approach.*

“The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust” (The Earth Charter).

Conclusion

A focused rangeland management strategy is needed by state and national bodies that recognises Australia’s unique ecosystems and outback landscapes and provides for the integration of wildlife in sustainable rangeland management systems.

Literature Cited

The Earth Charter. <https://earthcharter.org>



Thrushton National Park, a key representation of the ‘soft’ Mulga Lands (Photo: DEHP).

Author Profile

Clem Campbell has worked as an agricultural economist with the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in Roma; an executive and research officer with Bundaberg Canegrowers Ltd; a research and development officer with Bayer AG; and a member of Ministerial Primary Industries Committees, Queensland Parliament.