

What is unique about Australia in the world? Australia's flora and fauna and its natural history are completely unique in this world we live in. We have the highest extinction rates in the world and yet the greatest potential wealth in retaining and supporting our natural environment.

When will all people and all governments realise we cannot survive without clean air, clean water and clean, healthy food? Healthy biodiversity is the key to our future on this planet – we cannot survive as a species without it. Biodiversity of plants and animals can provide us with a healthy environment – clean air, clean water and clean food.

In Australia the native and indigenous plants and animals are linked in their survival. Without the Cassowary we do not have northern rainforests. Without the flying fox we lose an incredible number of native trees and plants across Australia (the flying foxes are important pollinators). As we lose the flora we lose a whole host of other organisms – animals, insects, birds. Both these animals are cornerstone animals. Without them we lose whole communities of other species.

In Queensland, where I live, the State Government believes we can survive without healthy biodiversity. The current LNP government believes coal and gas are the future for all our citizens. As one elderly retired cattle grower said to me – “you can't eat coal, can you?” Her children are now running the cattle property alongside coal mining activity that may well see their home completely destroyed – the place of their memories, their home and the family business all wiped out together, along with incredible native biodiversity.

Flying foxes can now be shot in Queensland.

Andrew Powell, our state minister for the environment and heritage is reputed to be unconvinced that global warming is caused by humans.

The current Queensland State government has stopped the effort to control crazy ants and fire ants – both species have the ability to destroy huge areas of native wildlife, impact severely on farming and destroy our outdoors way of life.

Of course the Federal government needs to retain environmental regulation at a Federal level to watch over, challenge and rein in the State Governments. Our biodiversity, wildlife, natural heritage and incredible unique natural assets are too valuable to be left to the State Governments.