



## Australia's biodiversity - economic values

### Is biodiversity worth keeping?

- Researchers have estimated the value of:
  - Australian terrestrial ecosystems at over \$300 billion per year; and
  - Australian marine ecosystems at over \$800 billion per year.
- Australian wildflower exports generated \$30 million in 1997 and the 'bushfood' industry was worth more than \$100 million in 2000.
- The kangaroo industry is estimated to support 4,000 jobs in rural areas, and the value of the industry is about \$245 million per year.
- The \$300 million-plus Australian honey industry depends greatly on native plant species for pollen and nectar.
- The economic contribution of the koala to the Australian tourism industry is \$1.1 billion per year through its iconic role in attracting international tourists.
- In the absence of Australia's unique wildlife, researchers estimated there would have been a loss of \$1.8 billion in 1996 in tourism revenue.
- About half a million tourists visit north Queensland for bird-watching every year. These tourists spend many millions of dollars in the local economy.
- For every \$1 spent by these "biodiversity tourists", another \$5 is generated in the local economy.

### What is the cost of land degradation to the Australian economy?

- Land degradation costs \$1.5 billion per annum in lost production which is 5% of the total value of agricultural production.
- Dryland salinity costs
  - \$130 million per annum in lost agricultural production.
  - \$100 million per annum in damage to infrastructure
  - at least \$40 million per annum in loss of environmental assets
- About 2.5 million hectares of land in the agricultural zone is effected by salinity (National Dryland Salinity Program 1998), making the cost of salinity about \$100 per hectare per annum



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