

CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN OCEANIA

Society for Conservation Biology Oceania Strategic Plan 2018-2023



Introduction to Oceania Section Strategy

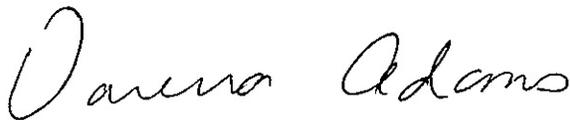
The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is a global community of professional conservation scientists and practitioners. The SCB has grown tremendously since it was founded in 1985. A major strategic initiative identified in 1999 led to the establishment of regional sections, and the evolution of SCB into an international society.

The SCB Oceania was created as part of this strategic initiative and has been functioning as a regional section of SCB with an elected independent board since 2005. The SCB Oceania region has five sub-regions, reflecting human cultures and colonisation: Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, New Zealand and Polynesia. In the past five years SCBO, among other activities, has: doubled its membership (250 members 2013 – 500 members 2018); held very successful conferences every two years (Darwin 2012; Suva 2014; Brisbane 2016; Wellington 2018); grown our regional chapters from 3 to 7; continued to support and grow the regional journal *Pacific Conservation Biology*, including a memorandum of understanding with CSIRO publications; and published conservation science statements (Weeks et al. 2016, PCB) and regional priorities (Weeks and Adams 2018, Conservation Biology).

SCBO has revised its strategic plan to build the impact of our Society in our region and to grow the programs and services we deliver to our members. This strategic plan has been based on the vision and goals of the global SCB organisation in its 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, adapted to reflect current opportunities and constraints in our region and our particular business model and membership needs.

Conservation Science in Oceania, SCB Oceania's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, is an outline for building the next generation of publications, events, programmes, and services that will add value to a growing and diverse body of conservation scientists and practitioners in the region. The plan provides strategic direction, implementation guidance and high-level parameters to guide SCB-Oceania's work over the two to four years. The SCB Oceania Strategic Plan is updated on a five yearly basis, and our work plan is updated every year.

The SCB Oceania has over 500 members around the region. Together this community of conservation professionals is working to advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity. By achieving the goals and objectives articulated in this plan, we believe we will enhance the impact of conservation science in pursuit of our mission.



Dr Vanessa Adams (President 2017 – 2020)

on behalf of the SCB Oceania Board, July 2018

Introduction to the Oceania Section Strategy

SCB Oceania (SCBO) is a regional semi-autonomous section of the global Society of Conservation Biology. While the SCBO Strategic Plan is broadly based on the SCB Global Strategic Plan, we have adapted this plan, incorporating aspects of particular relevance to the Oceania region, its biological communities, and its human cultures.

SCB-Oceania Mission, Vision, & Values

A clear mission, vision for the future, and explicit values are critical to an organisation's accountability, integrity, and effectiveness.

SCB Global Mission Statement

The Society of Conservation Biology advances the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

SCB-Oceania Vision

We promote effective conservation in Oceania, underpinned by science. We achieve our vision by:

- Promoting, performing, and synthesising conservation science;
- Collaborating with governments, managers, conservation organisations, and communities;
- Improving the capacity of local communities to engage in conservation; and
- Influencing policy and management of biological diversity and ecosystems with conservation science and practice.

SCB Oceania Organisational Values

The SCB and its members share the following common values:

1. A commitment to sustainability, recognising its importance for the long-term viability of human societies and environments.
2. The value of biodiversity – including ecological complexity – and evolutionary processes necessary to support all species including our own.
3. Human-caused extinctions in Oceania must decrease, particularly those caused directly or indirectly by ecosystem loss or degradation, overharvesting, climate change, invasive species, pollution, and disease.
4. Maintaining and restoring biodiversity is the responsibility of all people and their governments.
5. Improving the scientific knowledge base and building capacity of people in different communities and countries is critical to influencing decision-making.
6. The sciences, especially conservation sciences, perform a vital role in promoting understanding of the natural world and how human societies and actions can both positively and negatively affect it.
7. Policy and management decisions that affect biodiversity should be based on scientific evidence

SCB-Oceania Goals & Objectives

We have one organisational goal (increased capacity) and two programmatic goals (Science and Education; Policy and Management). These goals aim to focus our efforts to effect change by increasing regional coverage and influence of conservation research and enhancing the use of that science in management, education, and policy.

The activities under each goal, detailed in the workplan for each year, will track our progress each year of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2023.

ORGANISATIONAL GOAL

- **Increased Capacity:** SCB Oceania can increase its effectiveness by operating as a coordinated and coherent group that provides essential information relevant to our two major conservation programme goals. We find ways to increase our impact and role through communication mechanisms and through coordinated action by our members. We deliver meaningful scientific content and networking opportunities to our membership through mechanisms such as Conferences, associated workshops and short courses, and chapters. Our member expertise is expanded across a broad range of conservation areas to promote, support, and undertake conservation in our region. This is done by building our funding base and providing useful science and information, both of which help improve conservation outcomes.

PROGRAMME GOALS

- **Conservation Science and Education:** Scientific research and knowledge is essential for understanding systems for conservation and informing policy, management, and education. Conservation science and related activities of our members – as well as others working in this area – support conservation action. Communicating science through education and capacity building programs, allow communities to understand the ecosystems, how they work, and what threatens them and enables them to better conserve them.
- **Policy:** Conservation and development policies can significantly affect the long-term viability of ecosystems and their dependent organisms and processes. Science and its information are fundamental for evidence-based policies produced by government and other organisations. Dissemination of policy-relevant conservation information is a key focus of the Society for Conservation Biology Oceania Section (SCBO). This includes responding to government and community initiatives that may positively or negatively affect the environment.
-

I. Capacity

Goal

SCB-Oceania is recognised in the Oceania region for its role in conservation science and its impact on effective conservation. We encourage membership and active involvement, which allows us to increase our influence in our focus areas. SCB builds and maintains the organisational capacity necessary to operate.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

For effective input into conservation outcomes in our region, we must be recognised as credible by key decision-makers, potential partners, and the public. At the most basic level, powerful constituencies, interest groups, and institutions should look to us as a source of sound information that will help them resolve conservation problems. We will increase our interaction and effectiveness with the media, built on useful products from our key programme areas. We will have adequate capacity and direction. We will also focus on building reliable funding sources, an adequate operating reserve, committed and skilled staff, sound business practices, and an effective Board.

Objectives

1. Continue to expand and diversify Oceania Section membership.
2. Diversify funding streams and on ground programs for SCB Oceania.
3. Develop and maintain internal policies to support strong governance and clarity of purpose consistent with our mission and vision.
4. Support the setting up and maintenance of Chapters in different parts of the region
5. Hold an Oceania regional conference every two years in a different part of our region, focusing on key conservation issues.
6. Broaden and strategically integrate the SCB's publications, public events, workshops, and meetings.
7. Establish a forward facing engagement strategy for SCB Oceania including engagement with the media as well as other modes of communication such as newsletters, conferences, listservers, Facebook and Twitter.

II. CONSERVATION SCIENCE & EDUCATION

Goal Statement

Scientific research, partnering with local and traditional knowledge, provides the essential platform for evidence-based policy, management, and education. Our conservation science is relevant and accessible, and provides solutions. We provide education, training, and capacity-building programmes in conservation to ensure that this science is available to the public, conservation managers, policy-makers, and communities.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

SCBO form part of a global community of natural and social scientists, managers, and policy-makers committed to using science to support conservation management and policy. Scientific information that informs and integrates with policy and management is vital to halting biodiversity loss and sustaining complex evolutionary and ecological processes. SCBO members conduct science for effecting biodiversity conservation through local action, management, and policy at local, national, and global scales. We make our work clear, understandable, accessible, and applicable. We integrate our science into education and training programs to ensure it is being used by relevant communities to solve conservation problems.

Objectives

1. Identify, publish, and disseminate Oceania research priorities (and progress to date on historic priorities) periodically.
2. Support *Pacific Conservation Biology* and promote the journal to top conservation scientists for publishing and access
3. Award individuals recognising their contribution to effective conservation
4. Develop and build partnerships with organisations involved in conservation in Oceania (e.g. universities, research centers, NGOs) to enhance educational opportunities in conservation.
5. Develop and deliver education initiatives relevant to our membership via our conferences and associated public events.
6. Support relevant public events associated with platforms such as Science Week, Ocean week, Earth Day.

III. CONSERVATION POLICY & MANAGEMENT

Goal

Conservation and development policies significantly affect the long-term viability of ecosystems and their dependent organisms and processes. We provide science and knowledge to inform and improve such policies through engagement, access to scientific information, and responses to proposed government policies at local, national and international levels.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Conservation problems and their solutions benefit if the highest quality scientific expertise is applied to all local, national, and global policies affecting biodiversity. We will seek opportunities to make this expertise and knowledge available and relevant to the public, policy makers, and key conservation institutions at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Managers and policy-makers must be committed to the use of robust science, needed to effectively manage biodiversity at local, national, and global scales. This can be promoted through active and successful communication, as well as through developing frameworks such as adaptive management. The evidence base for effective conservation will continue to be a focus, given scarce conservation resources.

Our objectives

1. Develop internal SCB Oceania policy to ensure SCB Oceania is reflecting best practice in every aspect of its business.
2. Generate and enhance interest, involvement, and capacity of conservation biologists to work effectively with policy stakeholders
3. Support development of policy response papers to major issues (see Kingsford et al. 2009), including submissions to government policies and inquiries where relevant.
4. Use conservation papers or special issues (e.g. *Pacific Conservation Biology*) in Oceania