

**Launch of Indonesia's Orangutan Conservation Strategy and Action
Plan hosted by President Yudhoyono**

**13th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on
Climate Change
Bali, Indonesia**

**Speech by the Hon Peter Garrett MP
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts
10 December 2007**

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for inviting the Australian Government to participate in this important event.

I am confident that Indonesia's strategy and action plan will set a new standard for the alignment of development and conservation efforts in our region and across the globe.

There is a great deal of discussion here in Bali about the impacts of deforestation, forest degradation and the need for forest management on the global climate. This event reminds us also of the impacts on biodiversity and highlights the challenge of stabilising orangutan populations. I know that halting the dramatic decline in the orangutan populations of Sumatra and Kalimantan by 2017 will require action that is both urgent and comprehensive.

New programmes aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation are likely to have important biodiversity co-benefits – but a range of more targeted measures will also be required. In fact they are critical.

I note the elements of Indonesia's strategy and action plan.

First, it is based on good scientific information on the ‘critical survival thresholds’ of orangutans and it establishes medium-term targets based on this science.

Second, it reflects the fact that Indonesia’s Directorate of Forest Conservation and Nature Protection has spent three years consulting extensively with forest users to ensure they will have a voice in the development and implementation of the plan.

Third, the strategy highlights the importance of sustainable financing mechanisms – critical to the success of any long-term conservation efforts.

Finally, and above all, it has the high level support necessary to see it through – from the nation’s president himself.

So, I congratulate the Government of Indonesia and its partners on the development and launch of this initiative.

I am pleased to say that Australia will play a part in supporting Indonesia to implement its Orangutan Strategy and Action Plan.

Australia has made a \$500,000 commitment to work with a partner well-experienced in orangutan conservation in Indonesia – The Nature Conservancy, in East Kalimantan.

Central to this partnership is the recognition that efforts to protect orangutan habitats also need to protect the people whose livelihoods depend on the forests.

An approach that doesn’t recognise the important and complex relationship between the Indonesian people and their forests will only aggravate poverty and increase illegal activity.

Consequently, the activities that Australia will support – across 50,000 hectares of critical orangutan habitat in Berau and East Kutai – will include the protection of the livelihoods of around 8,600 men and women of 15 villages across the target areas.

Success in this initiative will also depend on constructive engagement with Indonesian government agencies and, importantly, other commercial operations active in the region.

Under this initiative, commercial operators active in high conservation value areas will have improved access to key habitat information and build skills to better conserve these habitats.

This targeted programme will complement broader initiatives such as the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership agreed between the Governments of Australia and Indonesia, with the aim of reducing carbon emissions from the drying and burning of peatlands in Kalimantan. This initiative will help to protect and restore peatland forests and thus enhance the extent and quality of orangutan habitat.

So, importantly, I say that Australia will not merely support Indonesia's strategy – we will also watch and learn from it, so that we can continue to improve the impact of our domestic and regional conservation efforts, and we look forward to seeing the orangutan well served by your actions..

Thank you.