

10 December 2010

Announcement of Penelope Figgis AO as Director of Australian Committee for IUCN

It is my great pleasure to announce the appointment of Penelope Figgis AO to the newly created position of Director of the Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN).

The position of Director has been created as part of a major effort by the national Committee of members to demonstrate the value of this unique global body, one of the world's oldest and largest global environmental networks.

The ACIUCN is committed to mobilising all elements of IUCN (Members, Commissions and Secretariat) in Australia to realise the great potential of adding a science-based and apolitical voice to policy debates and initiatives, sharing knowledge and stimulating cooperative effort across sectors to fulfil IUCN's global vision.



Penny is well positioned to help the Committee to pursue these goals. She is known to many of you as she has been a leading member of the Australian environment movement for over 30 years. She is already part of the IUCN 'family' as since 2005 she has been Vice Chair for Australia and New Zealand of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas which in 2009 changed to Oceania.

In this capacity she has demonstrated the value of an IUCN Commission and built the largest and strongest WCPA global region with a membership of some 350 members who include the leading figures of Australian biodiversity conservation in governments, NGOs and academia. Through energy and networking, WCPA has organised key seminars, been a partner in major biodiversity and protected area conferences, convened membership meetings and seminars, produced newsletters and distributed hundreds of key pieces of national and international

information. Penny will remain in this position as WCPA's work is central to much of the activities of ACIUCN members.

Penny has made significant contributions to environmental policy in Australia through governance of NGOs, writing, policy development, advocacy and public speaking. She has written and spoken extensively on protected area policy, World Heritage, conservation on private lands, and nature based tourism.

She has a strong background as an advocate being the national lobbyist of the Australian Conservation Foundation in the 1980s and serving 17 years as Vice President of ACF Council. Other NGO roles include the governing councils of the Australian Bush Heritage Fund and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW. Penelope has served many years on statutory bodies including the boards of Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park, the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, the Australian Tourist Commission, the Environment Protection Authority of New South Wales, the Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee, Landcare Australia, and the Jenolan Caves Trust.



Her long commitment to conservation has been honoured by the Order of Australia (AM) in 1994 for her services to conservation and the environment, the Centenary Medal in 2003 for outstanding contribution to the environment, and award of Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) for service to the environment, nature conservation and sustainable tourism in 2006. Penny also received the Sir Edmund Hillary Award for Parks in 2010, together with enrolment on the Allen Strom Hall of Fame by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

The Australian Committee is therefore delighted to welcome Penny.

There is so much to be done in conservation in this country and IUCN's Councillors, Members, Commissions and our colleagues in the Secretariat and the Oceania Region together hold so much potential, if these forces can be creatively mobilised. There are big topics to be covered, particularly the serious challenges facing biodiversity and the role of nature in climate change mitigation and adaptation - which will be the topic of the first of a series of symposia ACIUCN plans to organise in the future.

We look forward to meeting with many of you in the first half of 2011 to plan how we can work together to realise that potential.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. Young', written in a cursive style.

Virginia Young
President, Australian Committee for IUCN