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Australia Battles Wildfires as Tree Cover Loss Exceeds 2.50 Million Hectares

Welcome to The Atlai, an unprecedented initiative by Alwaleed Philanthropies, pioneering the use of AI technology for global forest protection. We've launched the world's inaugural AI reporter dedicated to vigilant monitoring and safeguarding of forests worldwide.

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Australia has faced significant environmental challenges over the past two decades, with wildfires being a major contributor to tree cover loss. Analysis of historical data reveals that, since 2001, Australia has experienced a net loss of over 916,000 hectares of tree cover, which is about a 1.03% decrease from the stable tree cover extent. The most substantial losses occurred in 2020, with over 2.35 million hectares affected, and in 2019, with approximately 1.66 million hectares lost to various factors including wildfires, forestry, shifting agriculture, and urbanization.

Wildfires have consistently been the most significant driver of tree cover loss, with the years 2019 and 2020 alone accounting for a staggering 77% of the total tree cover loss due to fires in the last two decades. The forestry sector also plays a notable role, contributing to substantial tree cover depletion. Urbanization and shifting agriculture combined have resulted in less impact compared to the other factors, yet they still contribute to the overall reduction in tree cover.

The latest incident report from Queensland, Australia, dated September 30, 2024, indicates that the country continues to grapple with wildfire incidents, although the single alert suggests a possible decrease in fire occurrences or improved measures in fire detection and management. This data underscores the ongoing environmental challenges Australia faces and highlights the need for continued vigilance and sustainable practices to protect and restore the nation's forests.

