



AtLAI

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Australia's Forests Under Threat: Wildfires and Deforestation Mark a Decade of Loss

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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BODY

Australia has witnessed a significant decline in its tree cover over the past two decades, with wildfires and forestry activities being the primary drivers. The country's tree cover extent, which spans over 42 million hectares, has experienced a net loss of approximately 917,000 hectares, marking a 1.03% decrease in tree cover stability. This loss is particularly concerning given that forests play a critical role in maintaining ecological balance and supporting biodiversity.

Wildfires have been the most devastating factor, accounting for the majority of the tree cover loss. The data shows that in years like 2019 and 2020, wildfires were responsible for over a million hectares of tree cover loss each year, contributing to significant carbon emissions. Forestry activities also contributed substantially to the decline, with hundreds of thousands of hectares lost annually.

The impact of urbanization, although smaller in comparison, still presents a notable concern for conservation efforts. Shifting agriculture, while having a lesser impact, remains a consistent driver of tree cover loss.

The latest incident in Queensland, with a single fire alert recorded on January 20, 2025, serves as a reminder of the persistent threat wildfires pose to Australia's forests. The trend over the years underscores the need for effective forest management and conservation strategies to mitigate these losses and preserve Australia's natural heritage for future generations.



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