



**Responsible Palm Oil Network**  
**Joint Position Statement**



## Context

Unsustainable palm oil production results in massive deforestation, rapid biodiversity loss in tropical ecosystems, and significant greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>1</sup> Global consumption of palm oil and its derivatives is increasing<sup>2</sup>, requiring urgent conservation action to save habitats and species.

Palm oil expansion often leads to the displacement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from their traditional lands and is increasingly linked to social conflict and the violation of workers' rights, including the use of forced and child labour on plantations.

Our organisations are well positioned to help break the link between palm oil production and deforestation, climate pollution and human rights abuses through educating and empowering consumers, and those involved in the supply chain, to take actions that support the transition towards a truly responsible palm oil industry.

By facilitating change through public audience and stakeholder engagement, we aim to drive the market for responsibly produced palm oil and expose industry laggards contributing to deforestation.

This network recognises that the palm oil industry plays an important role in employment and economic growth for developing countries.<sup>3</sup> It also acknowledges that moves away from palm oil will likely drive demand elsewhere for other vegetable oils<sup>4</sup>, none of which can meet the high productivity of palm oil per hectare with the smallest footprint when it comes to energy, fertiliser and pesticides. This shift in demand comes with unknown and potentially more damaging social and environmental impacts.

## Vision

Our vision is that 100% of all products in Australia and New Zealand are deforestation free. Using palm oil as a flagship crop we aim to halt and reverse deforestation globally, and encourage the restoration of forest cover at least to the levels seen in 2010, and protect the world's last intact rainforests.

## Mission

We aim to drive the transition to Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) by encouraging companies to use only CSPO in all the products they make and sell. CSPO is oil that comes from plantations that have been independently certified as meeting the standards of the RSPO.

<sup>1</sup> Fitzherbert EB, Strubig MJ, Morel A, Danielsen F, Bruhl CA, Donald PF and B Phalan. 2008. How will oil palm expansion affect biodiversity? Trends in Ecology and Evolution 23 (10): 538-545. Laurance, WF. 2007. Forest destruction in tropical Asia. Current Science 93(11):1544-1550.

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Statista 2015 Global consumption of vegetable oils from 1995/1996 to 2014/2015, by oil type (in million metric tons)

<sup>3</sup> Wilcove DS and LP Koh. 2010. Addressing the threats to biodiversity from oil-palm agriculture. BiodiversConserv 19:999-1007.

<sup>4</sup> Teoh CH. 2010. Key sustainability issues in the palm oil sector. A discussion paper for multi-stakeholders consultations (Commissioned by the World Bank Group).



We acknowledge that there are several other key tools that will help us achieve our vision, including:

- the mandatory labelling of palm oil on products in Australia and New Zealand, enabling consumers to distinguish between products that contain conventional or deforestation free palm oil.
- greater awareness of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and its definitions of Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO). We will hold the RSPO to account to ensure that all palm oil that is certified as “sustainable” is not linked to deforestation. We will work to improve the current RSPO certification in some areas, such as stronger mandatory regulations on greenhouse gas emissions, specifically in regards to the planting on peat, as well as stronger protection of High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) forest. Further there should be an emphasis on regular, thorough reporting among RSPO member companies, improvements in social and environmental assessments, auditing and enforcement of compliance and stronger action to address and expel violators of the P&Cs.
- supporting the responsible production of palm oil by industry leaders in the Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG).

We hope to build a framework to showcase how the sustainable production of a commodity can coexist with forests, species and local communities that can be applied to other commodities also currently contributing to deforestation.

## Position

This network calls on companies to source and use only RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (100% Segregated) as a minimum, building towards being verified by the Palm Oil Innovation Group Charter.

### (1) RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil

The **Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil** (RSPO) aims to transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm. The RSPO is the most high profile and best represented organisation involved in certifying palm oil as sustainable, using standards based on an evolving set of Principles and Criteria (P&Cs)<sup>5</sup> addressing a range of issues, including environmental and social impacts of palm oil.

Although there is more work to be done to improve the standards and policing of CSPO production, we recognise that the RSPO and the demand for CSPO is a critical first step towards solving this crisis and stopping current deforestation levels in High Conservation Value forests.

We acknowledge the new, voluntary standard RSPO NEXT that bans planting on peatland and other carbon-rich soils, and require companies to implement fire prevention policies, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, pay employees a living wage and commit to zero deforestation as a positive move by the RSPO and encourage companies to work to implement the new standards as a matter of priority.

### (2) Palm Oil Innovation Group

The **Palm Oil Innovation Group** (POIG) supports the RSPO through demonstrating that innovation and leadership, in responsible palm oil production and use, is possible and that it can be adopted into the mainstream. Its members are committed to displaying best practice, with independent, third party auditing, in regards to the P&Cs of the RSPO, particularly on the issues of deforestation, carbon stocks, biodiversity and social impact.

We recognise the need to influence the palm oil industry to adopt higher standards. We will collectively support the efforts of leaders that have halted deforestation in their entire operations. We will advocate for manufacturers to become supporters of the POIG and to require all suppliers to be verified as, or working towards, compliance with the Palm Oil Innovation Group Charter. We will use our role as advocates, and in some cases as members of the RSPO, to encourage the certification body to strengthen its standards so it aligns with the POIG and only certifies companies whose entire operations are free of deforestation.

### (3) Labelling

We support the adoption of Recommendation 12 of the ‘Labelling Logic’ report by the ‘Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation,’ the Ministerial Forum responsible for food labelling policy in Australasia. This recommendation would see all vegetable oils clearly labelled in the ingredients list of food products. Labelling brings a greater level of clarity and accountability allowing consumers to demand responsibly sourced palm oil, and enables Australasian consumers to distinguish between products that contain conventional or deforestation free palm oil.

<sup>5</sup> The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. 2013. RSPO principles and criteria for the production of sustainable palm oil. [http://www.rspo.org/en/document\\_principle\\_and\\_criteria\\_certification](http://www.rspo.org/en/document_principle_and_criteria_certification)

# Definitions

## Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO)

Certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) and palm kernel oil (CSPKO) is produced by palm oil plantations which have been independently audited and found to comply with the globally agreed environmental standards devised by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). These stringent sustainability criteria relate to social, environmental and economic good practice.

## Roundtable on Sustainable (RSPO)

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is a multi-stakeholder initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable production of palm oil worldwide. RSPO's more than 1000 members include palm growers, oil processors, traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, investors and social and environmental NGOs. Founding members include WWF, Unilever, and the Malaysian Palm Oil Association (MPOA).

## Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG)

The Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG) aims to support the RSPO through building on RSPO standards and commitments and by both demonstrating innovation to implement RSPO existing standards as well as with additional critical issues.

The POIG 'Charter' for palm oil producers is based on the RSPO P&Cs, but sets stronger standards on key issues, including the protection of secondary forests identified via the High Carbon Stock (HCS) Approach. POIG is supported by both current RSPO members as well as NGOs who are currently not satisfied with the RSPO approach.

## The Australasian Responsible Palm Oil Network is comprised of:

Jonathon Wilcken  
Director



Tony Gilding  
President



Stephen Standley  
Zoo Director



Nancy Moloney  
Chief Executive Officer



Melanie Vivian  
Chief Executive



Lou Grossfeldt  
Curator Collections



Toby Johnson  
Education Manager



Kobe Steele  
Co-founder/President



Michelle Desilets  
Executive Director



Claire Wright  
Director of Community Engagement



Cameron Kerr  
Executive Director and Chief Executive



Leif Cocks  
President



Ben Dowdle  
Director



Karen Fifield  
Chief Executive



Kevin Tanner  
President



Elaine Bensted  
Chief Executive



Jenny Gray  
Chief Executive Officer

