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Minister for the Environment

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Australia establishes International Partnership for Blue Carbon**

At the Global Landscapes Forum in Paris, Australia is pleased to announce that we are establishing an International Partnership for Blue Carbon.

The Partnership brings together governments, non-profit organisations, intergovernmental agencies, and scientists to increase understanding of, and accelerate action on the important role of coastal blue carbon ecosystems in climate change action.

Blue carbon – carbon stored in marine and coastal habitats – could play a significant role in reducing emissions, while also supporting biodiversity conservation, fisheries habitat protection, and disaster risk reduction.

Research has already demonstrated that coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass beds and salt marshes can be much more effective than forests at sequestering carbon.

The Partnership establishes a collaborative network of governments, non-profit organisations, intergovernmental agencies, and scientists to support:

- Measurement of coastal blue carbon ecosystems and their capacity to absorb carbon emissions;
- development of innovative approaches to protect and enhance coastal blue carbon ecosystems;
- science and research to support blue carbon measurement and management;
- capacity building and knowledge transfer across countries;
- the mobilization of funding to support coastal blue carbon ecosystem management from the private sector and mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund.

While constituting only 2-6 per cent of the total area of tropical forest, degradation of these ecosystems emits the equivalent of 19 per cent of the annual carbon emissions from global deforestation.

These coastal ecosystems also provide critical ecosystem services, such as disaster risk reduction, water filtration and fisheries habitat.

Blue carbon ecosystems therefore provide both emissions reduction and climate change adaptation benefits.

This growing recognition of the value and importance of coastal blue carbon ecosystems has motivated a range of activities to better manage blue carbon resources, including in the context of

REDD+, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), voluntary carbon markets, and post-2020 Intended National Determined Contributions.

Some countries have also commenced work towards including coastal blue carbon ecosystems in their national greenhouse gas inventory through implementation of the IPCC supplementary guidance on wetlands. Support for science in blue carbon ecosystems is also growing.

The International Partnership for Blue Carbon seeks to scale up and amplify such efforts.

The founding members of the International Partnership for Blue Carbon are:

- Australia
- Indonesia
- Costa Rica
- the Blue Carbon Initiative (Conservation International, IUCN, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission - UNESCO)
- GRID-Arendal
- the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP)
- the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Office of the Pacific Oceanscape Commissioner
- the Centre for International Forestry Research; and
- the Global Change Institute.

The founding members of the International Partnership for Blue Carbon will develop a roadmap to guide their work, and work to bring in new members.

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