

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) NOTIFICATION 2015-068

Clearing-House Mechanism Award

Submission by Australia

Submission date:	July 2015
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Organization:	Department of the Environment
Government:	Australia
Website URL:	http://www.environment.gov.au/

Notification 2015-068: Clearing-House Mechanism Award

1. Please summarize the evolution of your national CHM to date. Please focus on key actions and achievements, and indicate milestone dates (e.g. website launch or revamp).

Australia's national clearing-house mechanism (CHM) for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the website of the national Environment portfolio, in particular, the 'Biodiversity' sub-section of that website.

Australia's CHM was established in the late 1990s and significant investments have been made throughout the decades following, in order to improve the quality, scope and accessibility of content. The following points summarise key stages in the development of this important resource.

- i. 1996 – Environment Australia Biodiversity Group webpage. The Biodiversity Group was the principle nature conservation program of the Australian Government (Figure 1). The national environmental law for biodiversity at that time this website was developed was the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*. Although the relevance of the CBD to the portfolio was not explicitly identified on the sub-pages of this site, the website was clearly envisaged as a source of information on the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity (Figure 2). This webpage was a platform that could be built upon to deliver an improved information portal that clearly identified the linkages with the CBD.
- ii. 1998 – The 'About Us' link was modified to a 'Biodiversity' link on the Biodiversity Group home page (Figure 3). The 'Biodiversity' and 'International' sub pages (Figure 4 and Figure 5) had an improved suite of information relating to Australia's international obligations as a Party to the CBD and links to Australia's NBSAP (*National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity 1996*). It was also clearly acknowledged that the website was being upgraded in order to become an effective national CHM for the CBD (Figure 5).
- iii. 2000 – An upgrade of the Environment Australia website allowed the CHM function to be presented as a stand-alone gateway to information related to Australia and the CBD (Figure 6 and Figure 7). This upgrade also allowed Australia to showcase the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, the national environmental law that is still the regulatory mechanism for implementing Australia's obligations as a Party to the CBD. It also provided guidance to assist people understand the new domestic requirements under the legislation (for example, national environmental impact assessment) and how to get more information (i.e. databases and other tools) (Figure 8).
- iv. 2004 – The next major refresh of Australia's CHM was in 2004, following a change in the agency name to the Department of Environment and Heritage (Figure 9 and Figure 10). A CHM-dedicated page still existed, but the front-end design and website as a whole was becoming more accessible and well-presented.
- v. 2009 – In this year there was a significant visual refresh of the website, following two agency name changes in the preceding years (Figure 11). There was a greater focus on presentation of the 'theme based' home page (Figure 12). The CHM-dedicated page remained (Figure 13), but exposure of the website, both domestically and internationally, as a repository of national environmental knowledge was cemented and CHM-type information 'seeking and providing' tools are embedded throughout the site.
- vi. 2011 – The website of the renamed Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities agency was updated, with some slight changes and improvements in presentation, including parts of the website that were not brought up to date with revised design in 2009 (Figure 14 and Figure 15). A significant change was the development of

webpages presenting Australia's revised NBSAP '*Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*' and integration of CBD information and elements of the CHM (Figure 15). The revised NBSAP, developed in partnership with sub-national governments, allowed the CHM to also provide linkages to sub-national Government information.

- vii. 2013 and 2014 – This website upgrade followed a change in the agency name to the Department of the Environment and involved significant design and cosmetic changes throughout all pages (Figure 16 to Figure 18), but also a substantial back-end change of the content management system to Drupal (7). Although some content remained unchanged, much of the website was reorganised to support and showcase the Australian Government's '*Cleaner Environment Plan*' (Figure 16). The changes incorporated better practice web design techniques, in order to further enhance the presentation of content and provide a more engaging experience for users and seekers of information. This revision of the website also utilises 'responsive web design', recognising the fact that the majority of web searches are now carried out using mobile devices (such as smart phones). This means that presentation and functionality is maintained on a screen of any size and can be just as easily navigated using touch controls.

2. Please summarize the current strategic vision to establish or further develop your national CHM, and how it is expected to contribute to the implementation of your NBSAP.

The Department of the Environment, as manager of Australia's CBD CHM, operates under the Australian Government Digital Service Standard (DSS). The DSS establishes the criteria that Australian Government digital services must meet, to ensure online services are simpler, faster and easier to use. Meeting the criteria means the Department can consistently provide high-quality services and satisfy user needs, particularly in the growing mobile access space. Additionally, the Department is working toward Australian Government online information transformation goals. The focus of this approach is to transform the overall Australian Government online presence into an integrated 'topic and task driven' information presence.

The Australian CHM will benefit from this process through an increased focus on end-to-end information paths for users.

The Department's Website Policy states that aims website design are to:

- provide a consistent, clean, uncluttered look that is modern, flexible, attractive and polished with a clear visual hierarchy, well defined functional areas and adequate negative space;
- use colours and graphic elements that are appropriate for the target audience and aid the website's visitors to quickly and easily locate their required information or service. Navigation elements in particular must be consistent and predictable;
- support the usability goals of the website by providing simple and intuitive interfaces that are easy to learn;
- comply with the Australian Government's [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines v 2.0](#), with particular attention to criteria relevant to colour contrast and use, and non-text content;
- recognise that users no longer just browse the website with desktop computers. To enhance users' mobile experience 'responsive web design' should be used.

3. Please describe the expected progress in the establishment or further development of your national CHM by 30 June 2016. If possible, please include a roadmap of actions with their corresponding objectives.

At this time, there is no formalised 'road-map' for further development of the CHM. However, there is a process of evaluation and improvement, which result in incremental change to the website, driven by the requirements of business areas in the Department and policy priorities of the Australian Government.

4. Please provide some technical information about your national CHM, in particular:

a. its content management system (CMS) or toolkit

The Australian CHM is currently running the Drupal (7) content management system.

b. its backend database

The CHM runs a number of databases as a part of its online presence, predominantly Oracle/SQL. Australia can provide further technical detail to the CBD Secretariat on request.

c. its method to collect web statistics

The CHM uses Google Analytics to monitor web traffic.

d. the name and email of the webmaster in order to get further details.

Rohan Langeveld; rohan.langeveld@environment.gov.au.

5. Please provide a list of links to the main online services or web pages of your national CHM in order to show that it meets some of the criteria described in annex I.

Aspect	Criteria	Link
Content	Information on biodiversity in the country	Biodiversity Home Page
	Information on NBSAP	Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030
	Biodiversity thematic areas	Biodiversity Conservation Threatened Species and Ecological Communities Threatened Species Strategy Migratory Species Wildlife Trade Invasive Species Biological Resources
	Access and Benefit-Sharing	Australia's Biological Resources Benefit-sharing Form
	National legislation	National Legislation
	Regional or international cooperation	Regional Marine Fora Asia-Pacific Rainforest Summit
	Case studies, assessments, reports	Publications and Resources
	News and events	Media Centre
	Links to other national websites	Portfolio Websites
	Other relevant resources – consultation	Public Consultation

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Aspect	Criteria	Link
	opportunities	
	Other relevant resources – access to grants and funding	Grants and Funding
	Other relevant resources – Annual Reports and Budget	Annual Reports Budget
Online Searches	Search engine	Home Page Search Bar
	Online databases and/or links and other modern services (i.e. maps)	Environmental Resources Information Network (ERIN) Collaborative Australian Protected Area Database (CAPAD) Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) Australian Natural Heritage Assessment Tool (ANHAT) Species Profile and Threats (SPRAT) MyEnvironment App
	Collaboration and communication tools	Connect with Us
	Online submission services	Department of the Environment consultation surveys
Layout	Home page, design and attractiveness, menu and navigation, user-friendliness	Home Page
Visibility and Usage	Activities undertaken to promote the national CHM	Connect with Us
Content Management	Use of a content management system	The CHM uses Drupal (7)
	Systems in place to gather and analyse statistics	Google Analytics is used to monitor CHM visitation and usage.
Governance	Strategy to maintain and improve the CHM	See further information below.
	Coordination committee	The CHM is managed by a dedicated team within the Australian Government Department of the Environment.

Table 1: Links that demonstrate how Australia's CBD CHM meets the criteria detailed in Annex I to notification 2015-068.

6. If you have means to monitor the use of your national CHM (e.g. Google Analytics), please provide the web statistics for the visits in 2013 and 2014.

The migration of the CHM to the Drupal at the end of 2013 resulted in a drop in the reported website traffic from 2013 to 2014. This occurred due to a change in the way publications on the CHM were migrated onto the new system. From the point of migration, they were measured in a separate profile and no longer included in the count of the CHM URLs. Therefore, the reported 'drop' between 2013 is not indicative of real traffic. Adjusted figures are available for these years on request.

The moderated average sessions per day for the Biodiversity section of the CHM based on 2012 to 2015 (year to date) data is 2,288. This moderated average would result in approximately 835,120 sessions per year.

7. If you have means to monitor the content updates of your national CHM, please provide statistical reports on these updates in 2013 and 2014.

Content updates to the CHM are tracked, but due to resource constraints, Australia is currently not able to provide summary statistics. Content is updated on a needs basis, with some areas subject to very regular updates and others remaining static. The '[Biodiversity](#)' area of the website is constantly updated, as there are regular developments, changes and improvements in data, policy and legislative instruments in this space.

8. Please indicate or attach other information related to the establishment or further development of your national CHM, including for instance a strategy, a progress report or any other relevant document. Please note that such additional information can be submitted at any time.

There are informal processes regarding the technology running the CHM, including browser and mobile device access and search engine optimisation. These are mostly undertaken as a part of 'business as usual' improvement processes.

A part of the online information transformation process being led by the DTO is to simplify access to core information for target audience groups (individuals and business). I imagine that this will flow through to Departmental levels as a need to take a more strategic approach to what information we are putting up and how we are structuring it. I think that what the DTO is aiming to do to the Australian Government web presence is probably the best higher level response to this.

FIGURES AND TABLES

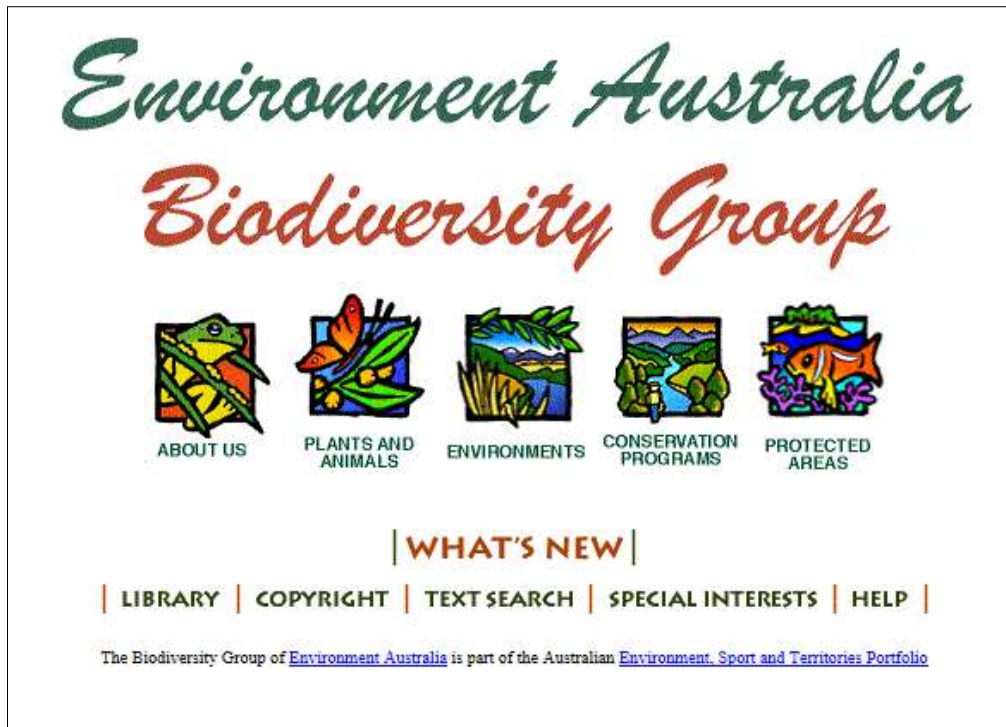


Figure 1: 1996 - Environment Australia – 'Biodiversity Group' Home page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

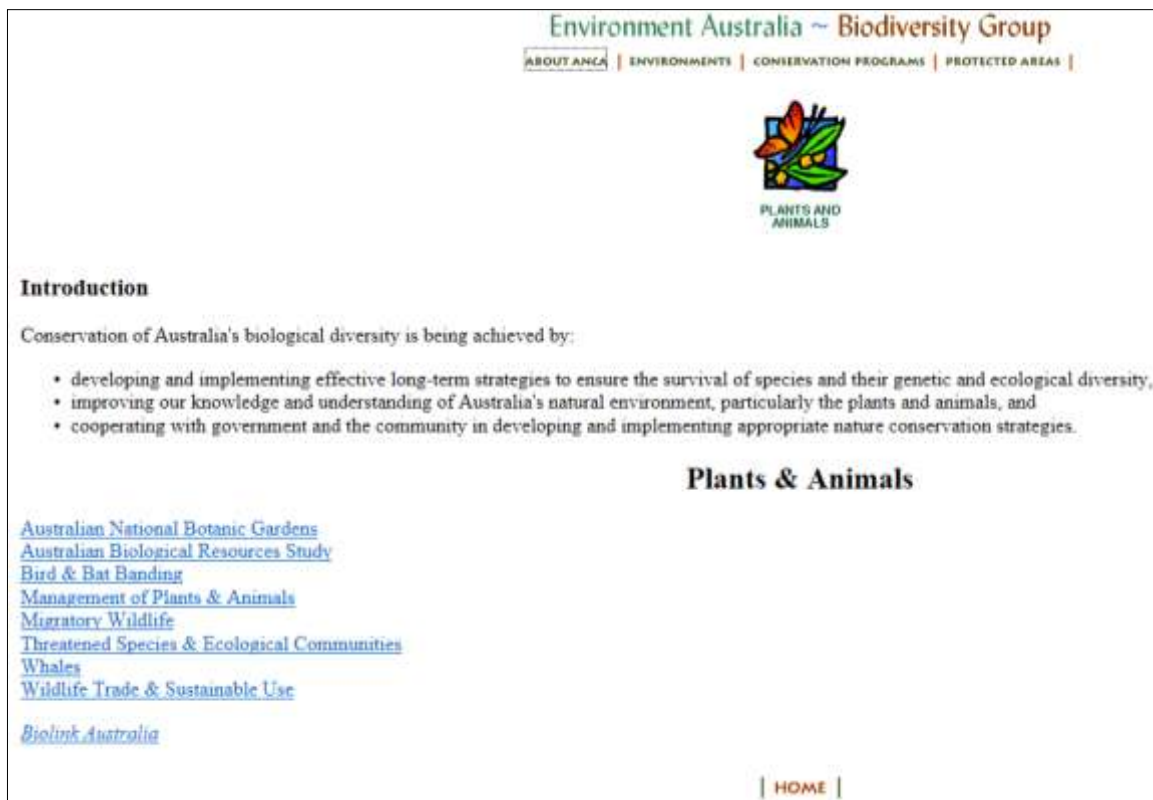


Figure 2: 1996 - Environment Australia – Biodiversity Group 'Plants and Animals' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.



Figure 3: 1998 - Environment Australia – 'Biodiversity Group' Home page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.



Figure 4: 1998 - Environment Australia - 'Biodiversity' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.



life

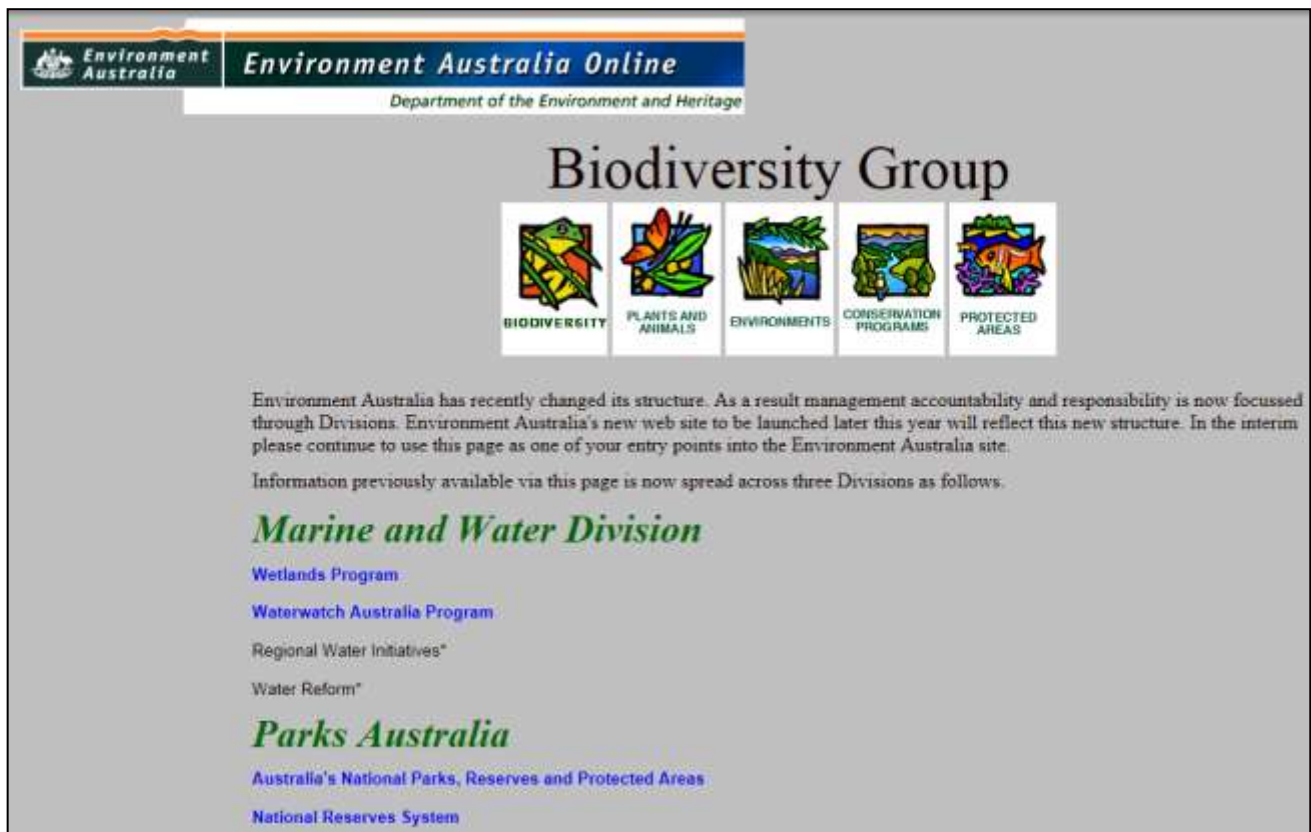
[[What's New?](#) | [Search](#) | [Navigator](#) | [Comment](#) | [Home](#) | [©](#)]

International Programs, Initiatives and Policies

Descriptions are from the [National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity](#)






- [Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
- [Australia's International Role](#) - Chapter 6, National Strategy
- [International agreements](#)
 - Existing agreements
 - [A Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
 - New agreements and activities
 - [Second Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(COP-2\)](#)
 - [Third Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(COP-3\)](#)
 - [Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice \(SBSTTA\)](#), Convention on Biological Diversity
 - [Valdivia](#)
 - [BioRap: Rapid Appraisal of Biodiversity Resources Project](#)
- [Overseas activities](#)
 - [Trade](#)
 - [Training](#)
- [International cooperation](#)
 - [Bilateral and multilateral aid](#)
 - [International scientific collaboration](#)
 - [Other forms of cooperation](#)
- [International Biodiversity Day, December 29th](#)

Figure 5: 1998 – Environment Australia 'International Programs, Initiatives and Policies' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.



Environment Australia **Environment Australia Online**
Department of the Environment and Heritage

Biodiversity Group

 BIODIVERSITY	 PLANTS AND ANIMALS	 ENVIRONMENTS	 CONSERVATION PROGRAMS	 PROTECTED AREAS
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Environment Australia has recently changed its structure. As a result management accountability and responsibility is now focussed through Divisions. Environment Australia's new web site to be launched later this year will reflect this new structure. In the interim please continue to use this page as one of your entry points into the Environment Australia site.

Information previously available via this page is now spread across three Divisions as follows.

Marine and Water Division

- [Wetlands Program](#)
- [Waterwatch Australia Program](#)
- [Regional Water Initiatives*](#)
- [Water Reform*](#)

Parks Australia

- [Australia's National Parks, Reserves and Protected Areas](#)
- [National Reserves System](#)



Figure 6: 2000 – Environment Australia ‘Biodiversity Group’ Home page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

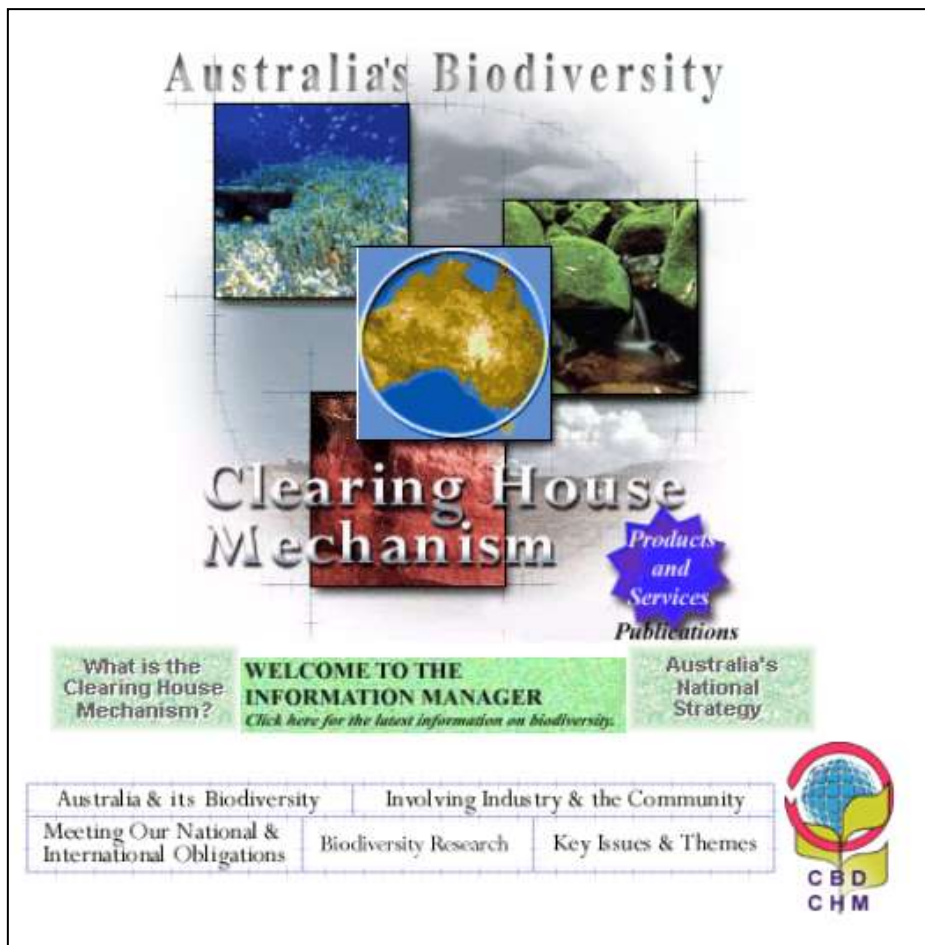


Figure 7: 2000 – Environment Australia ‘Australia’s Biodiversity CHM’ page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

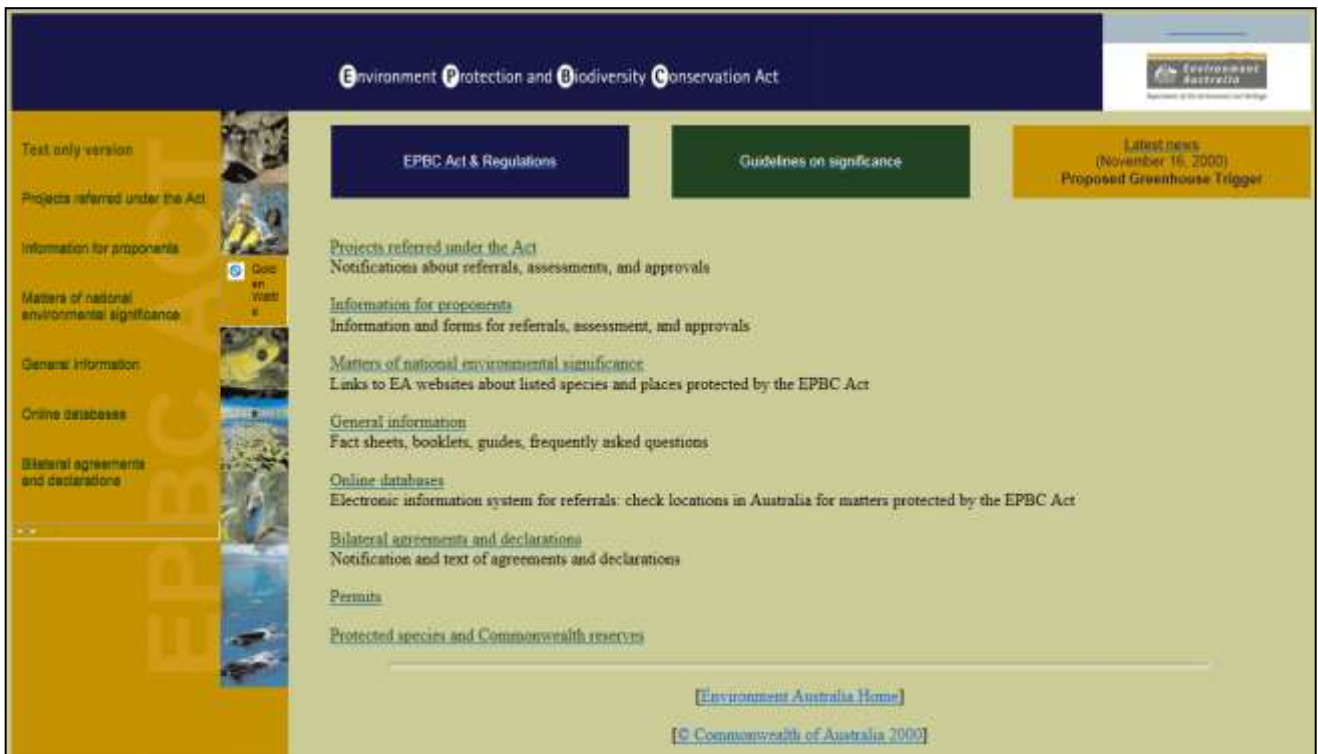


Figure 8: 2000 – Environment Australia ‘EPBC Act’ page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

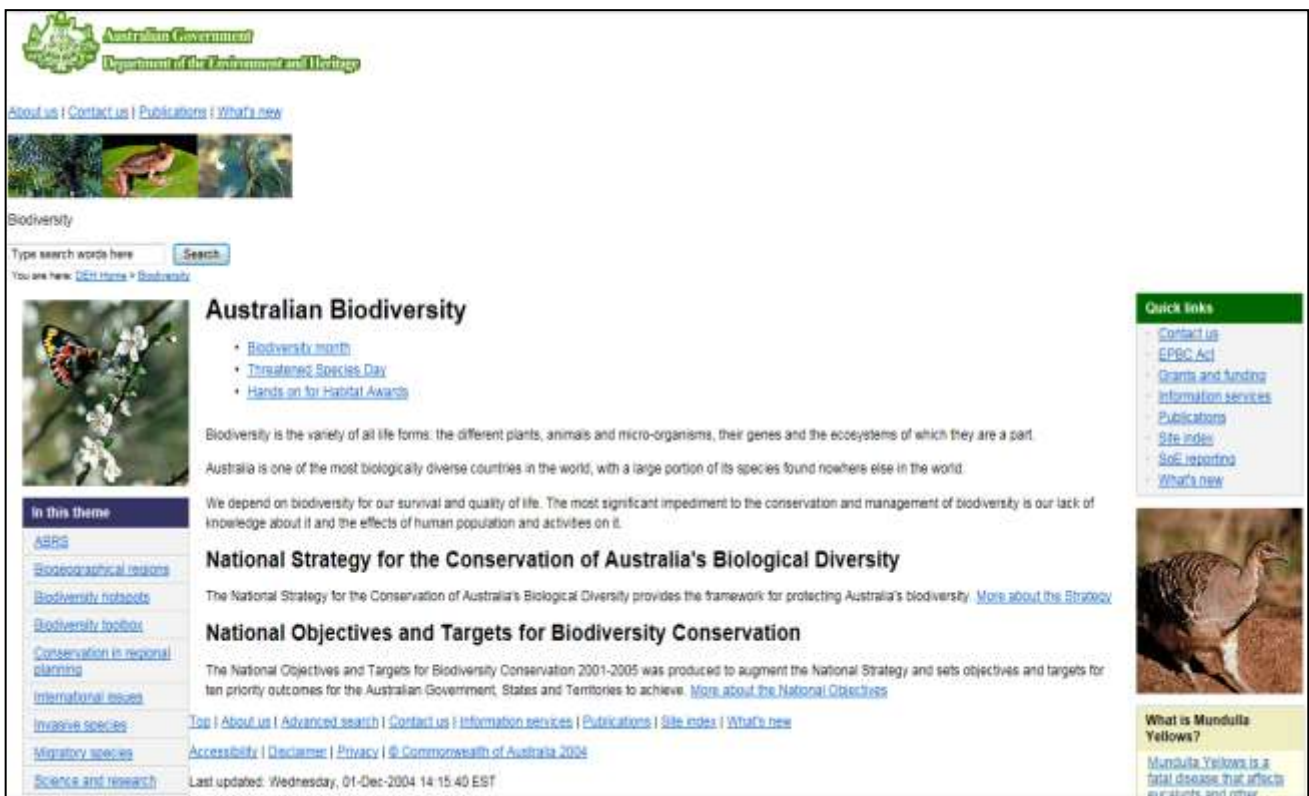


Figure 9: 2004 – Department of Environment and Heritage – ‘Australian Biodiversity’ page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

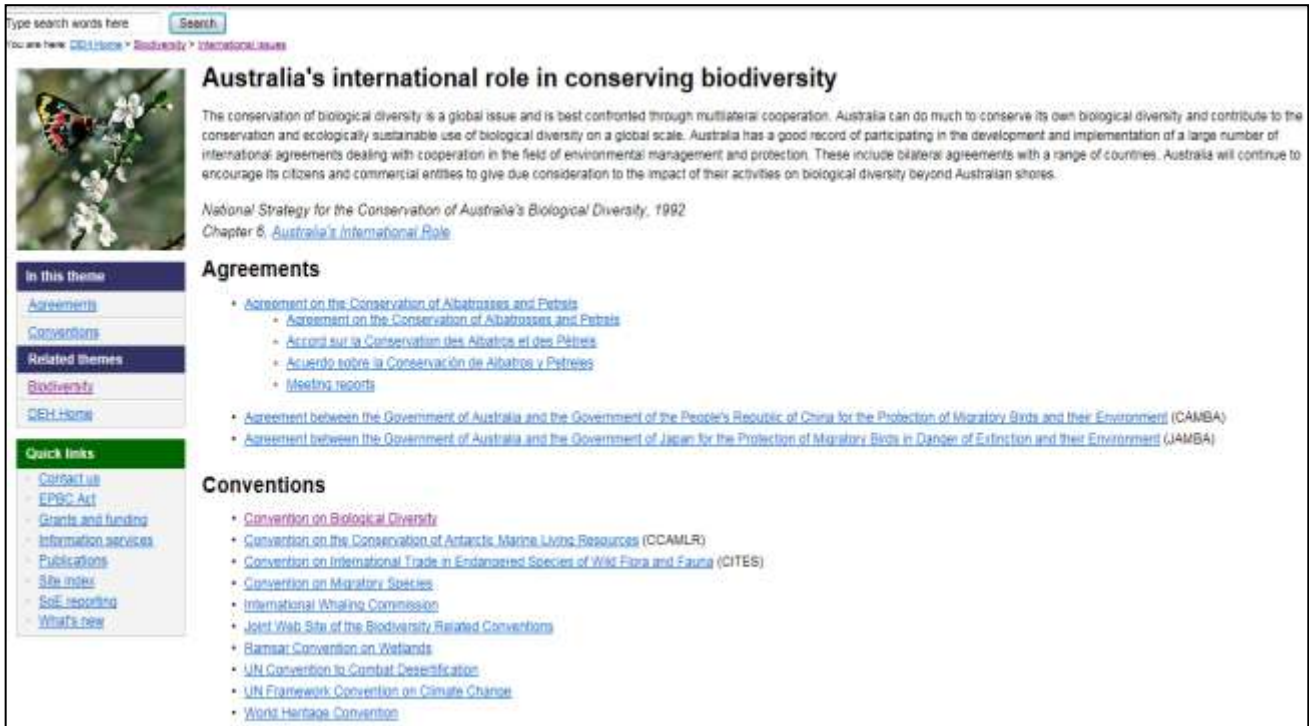


Figure 10: 2004 - Department of Environment and Heritage 'International Issues' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

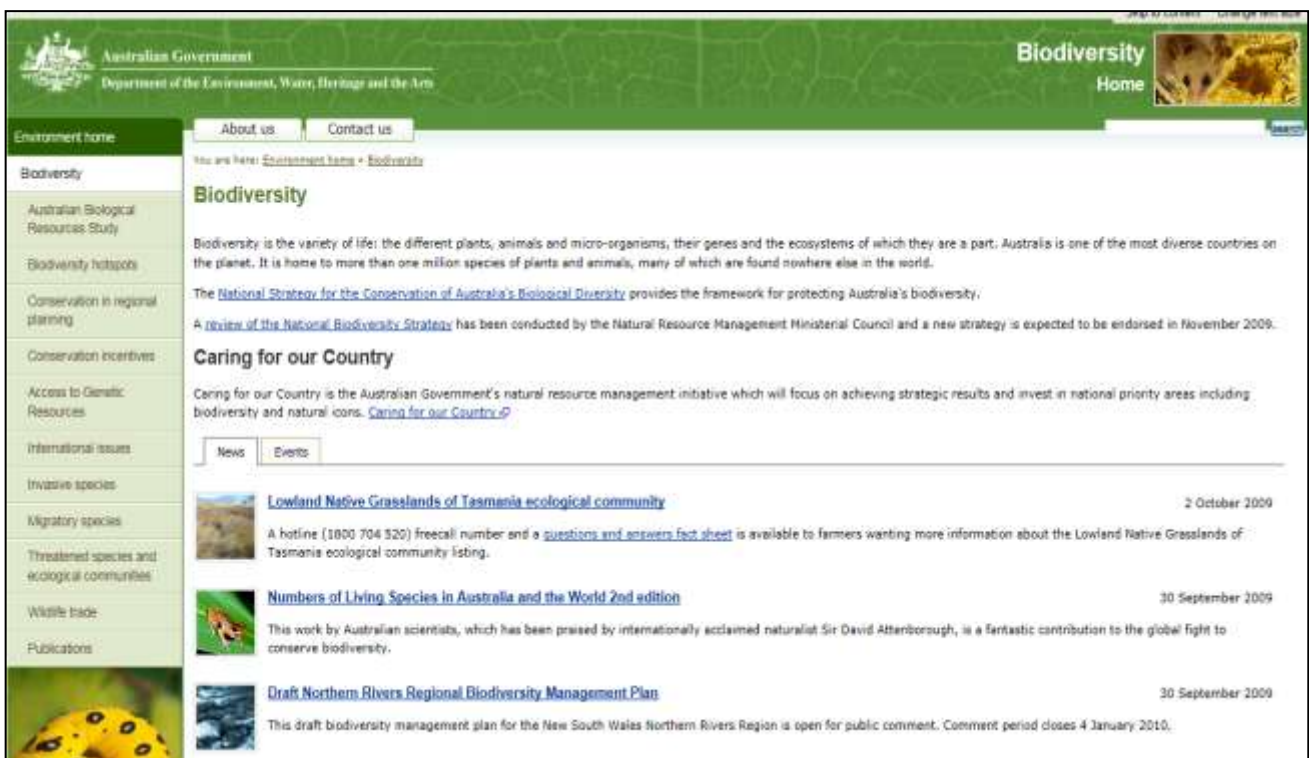


Figure 11: 2009 - Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts 'Biodiversity' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

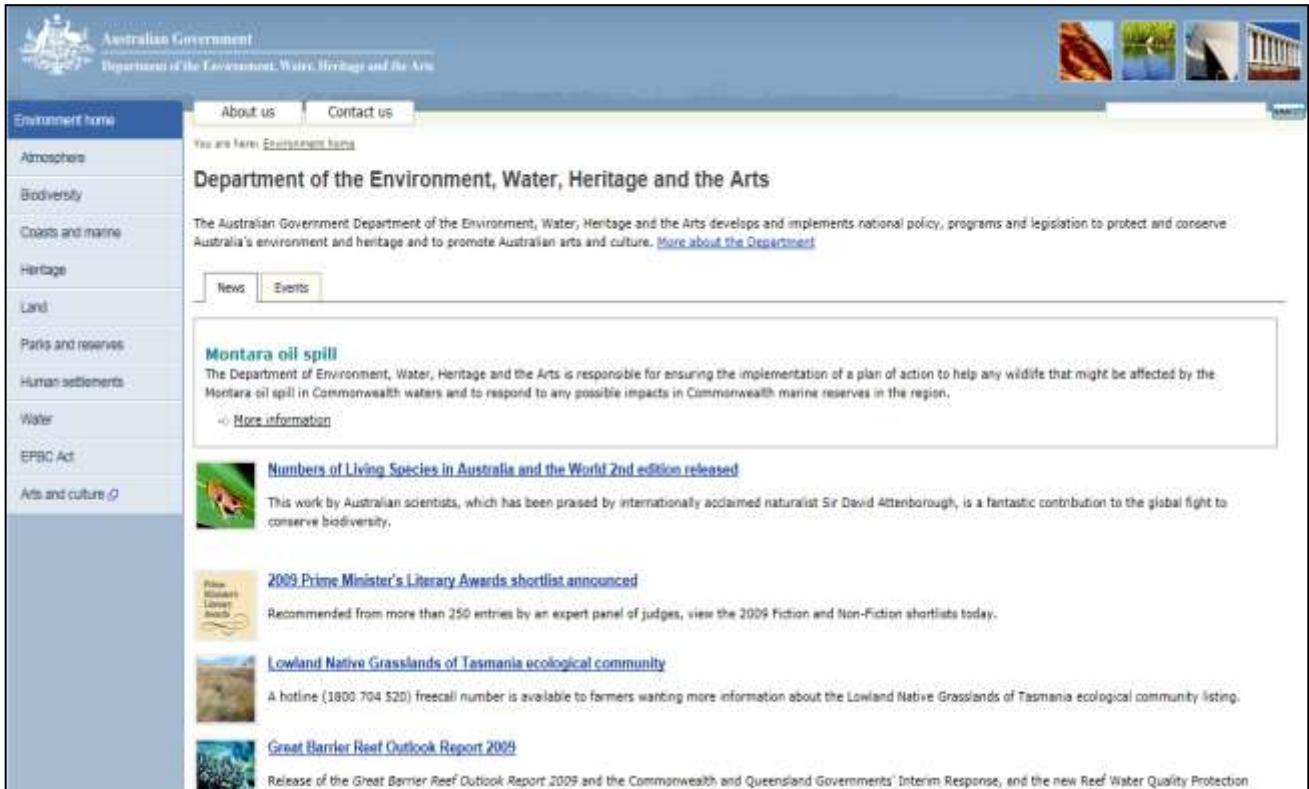


Figure 12: 2009 - Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Home page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

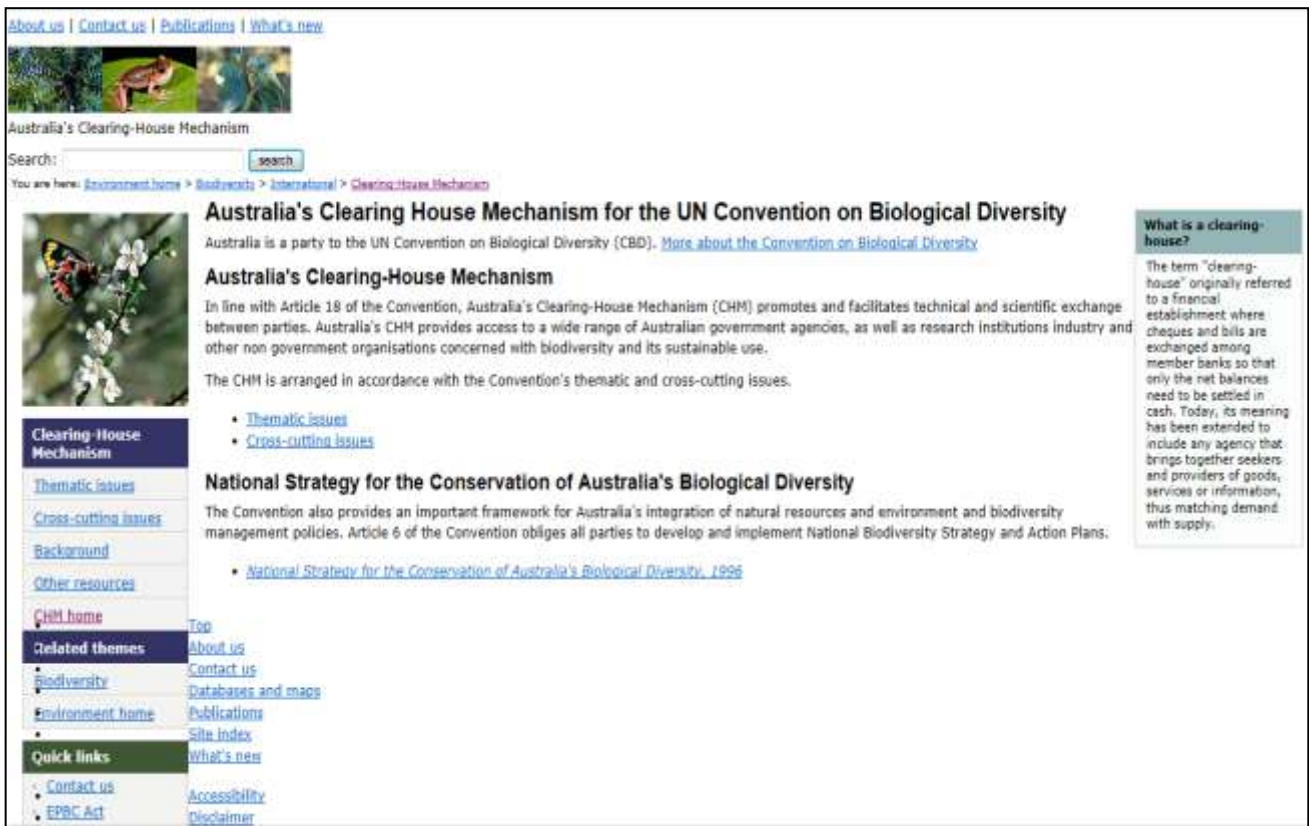


Figure 13: 2009 - Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts 'CHM' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.



Figure 14: 2011 – Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 'International activities' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

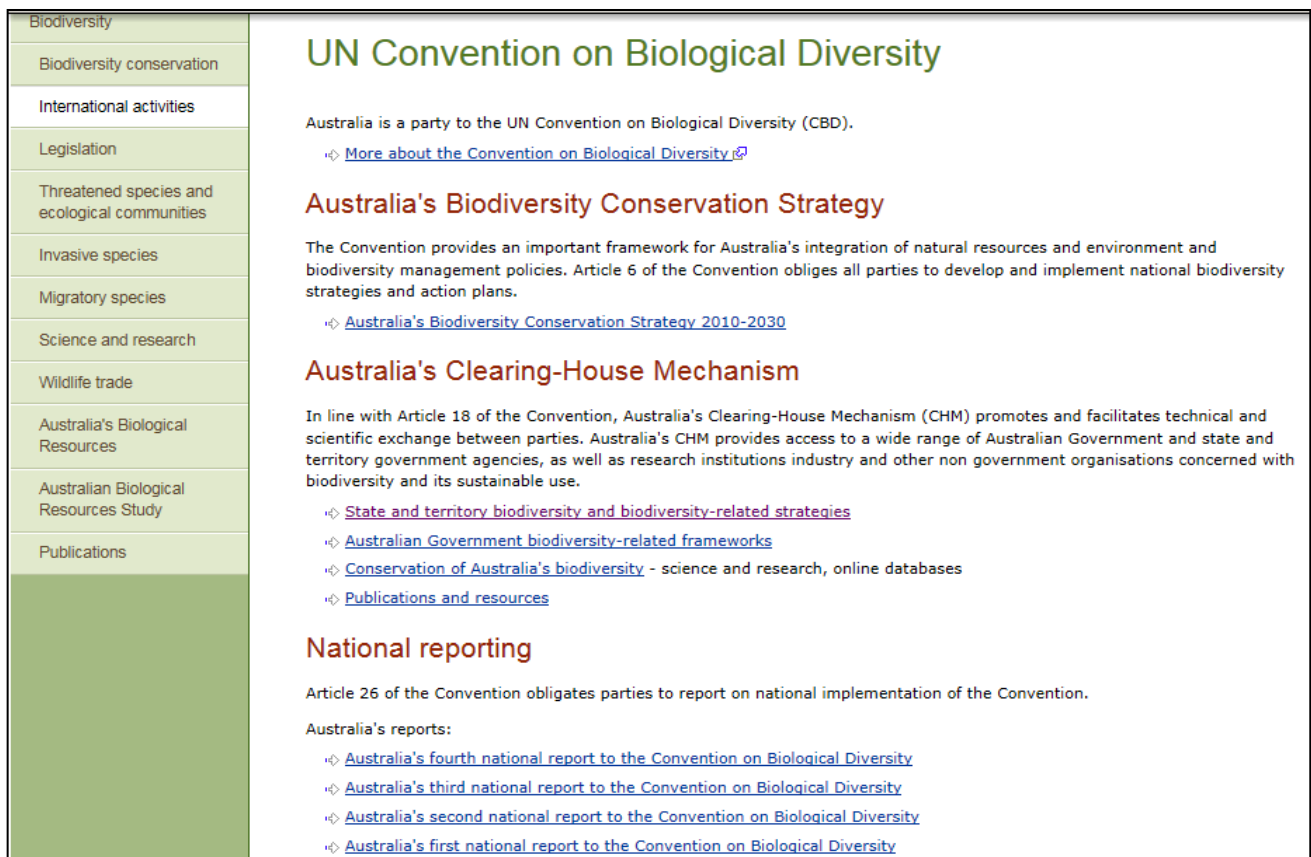


Figure 15: 2011 – Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 'UN CBD' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

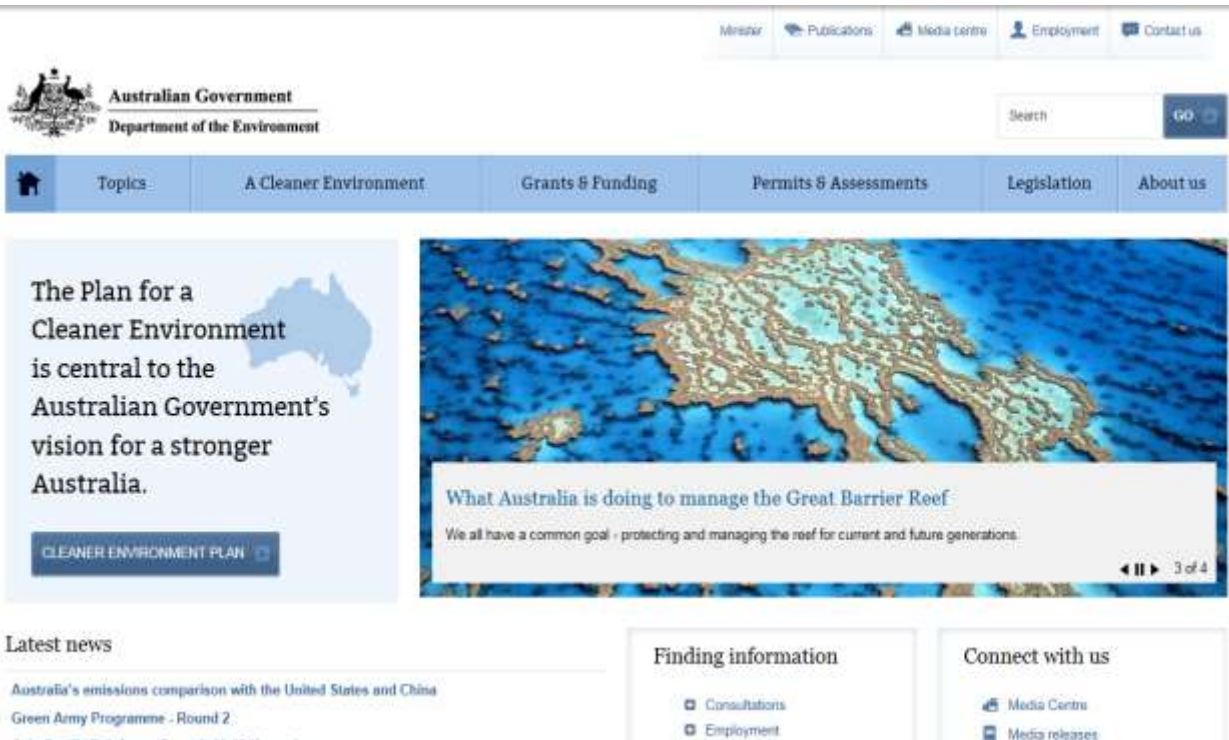


Figure 16: 2014 – Department of the Environment Home page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

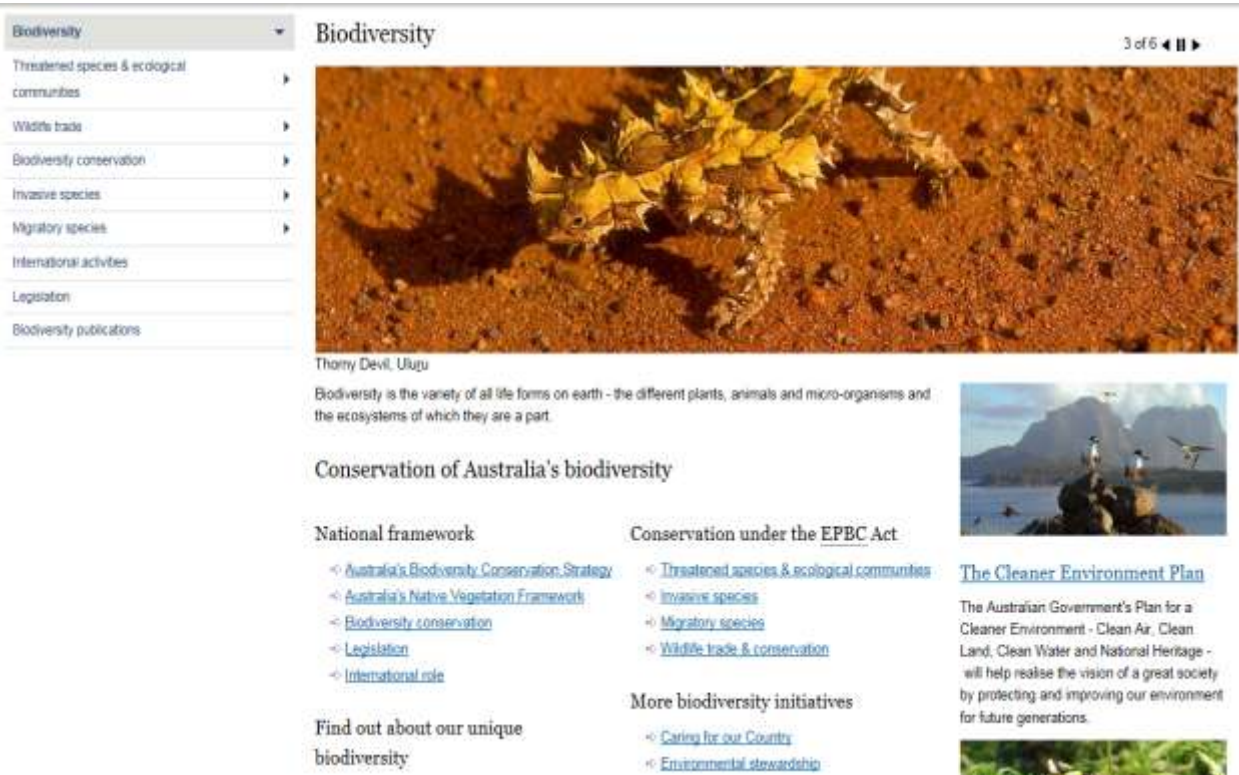


Figure 17: Department of the Environment 'Biodiversity' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.

The screenshot shows the Australian Government Department of the Environment website. At the top left is the Australian Government logo and the text 'Australian Government Department of the Environment'. To the right is a search bar with a 'GO' button. Below this is a navigation menu with tabs for 'Home', 'Topics', 'A Cleaner Environment', 'Grants & Funding', 'Permits & Assessments', 'Legislation', and 'About us'. The 'Topics' tab is selected, and a breadcrumb trail shows 'Home > Topics > Biodiversity > International activities > UN Convention on Biological Diversity'. On the left, a sidebar menu has 'Biodiversity' selected. The main content area is titled 'UN Convention on Biological Diversity' and contains the following text and links:

Australia is a party to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
[← More about the Convention on Biological Diversity](#)

Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
The Convention provides an important framework for Australia's integration of natural resources and environment and biodiversity management policies. Article 6 of the Convention obliges all parties to develop and implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
[← Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030](#)

Australia's Clearing-House Mechanism
In line with Article 18 of the Convention, Australia's Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) promotes and facilitates technical and scientific exchange between parties. Australia's CHM provides access to a wide range of Australian Government and state and territory government agencies, as well as research institutions industry and other non government organisations concerned with biodiversity and its sustainable use.

- [← State and territory biodiversity and biodiversity-related strategies](#)
- [← Australian Government biodiversity-related frameworks](#)
- [← Conservation of Australia's biodiversity - science and research, online databases](#)
- [← Publications and resources](#)

Figure 18: Department of the Environment 'UN CBD' page. Source: Pandora (Australian Government Web Archive), [URL](#). Accessed 13 July 2015.