



**Wildlife Asia**

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This submission has been uploaded electronically, via: [www.aph.gov.au/Committee/Submissions](http://www.aph.gov.au/Committee/Submissions).

### **Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. This submission is made on behalf of Wildlife Asia Inc. (WA).

WA maintains the Wildlife Asia Conservation Fund. This fund is a public listed fund listed on the register of environmental organizations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

#### *History and profile*

- WA was established in 2011.
- WA is incorporated under the Western Australian Associations Incorporations Act 1987.
- WA has a membership of 100 and a growing supporter base of 1000.
- WA raises approximately \$200,000/ yr. through tax-deductible donations from private and corporate donors.

#### *Purpose and activities*

- WA was formed as a partnership between several species focused conservation organisations to improve efficiencies and contribute to broad scale wildlife and habitat protection projects in Southeast Asia.
- WA is rapidly gaining support amongst the conservation community, delivering effective conservation action through Wildlife Protection Units and the establishment of protected areas in high biodiversity landscapes.
- WA works in partnership with local NGO's and government departments to ensure efficient and effective implementation of field projects.
- WA engages directly with the Australian public, children and adults, with a view to improving understanding of the importance of environmental protection and the interdependency of animal communities and social and community welfare.

WA reports to donors in our annual report as well as regular newsletters and via social media. In addition to the in situ activities listed above, WA engages directly with communities in Australia, combining an environmental message with fund raising. It carries out a wide range of activities including lectures, school presentations, and events.

## Submission on matters under consideration by the Committee

WA would like to submit on the following matters:

### **The definition of ‘environmental organisation’ under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, including under Subdivision 30-E**

To be an ‘environmental organisation’, the principal purpose of the organisation must be: (a) the protection and enhancement of the natural environment or of a significant aspect of the natural environment; or (b) the provision of information or education, or the carrying on of research, about the natural environment or a significant aspect of the natural environment.

WA agrees with these purposes and submits that the ‘environment’ should *continue* to include:

- The protection of animals in their natural environment, and
- The protection of animals in their natural environment in countries other than Australia.

In support of this, WA draws the Committee’s attention to WA’s activities that directly protect animals and their environment in Southeast Asia. WA believe that the protection of forests in our neighbouring countries has a positive flow on effect and, over time, a direct impact on Australia’s environment.

WA believes that the tax deductibility of donations has a critical effect on the level of donations that it receives, and hence its ability to achieves it purposes.

### **The requirements to be met by an organisation to be listed on the Register and maintain its listing**

WA feels strongly that donations made to organisations listed on the Register must be used for the principal purposes of the organisation. It accepts that attracting and administering donations has a cost associated with it, but submits that this cost should be kept to a minimum and should be proportionate to the funds raised. WA manages to keep its administration costs below 10 percent. This means that 90 percent of what is donated to WA goes directly to the projects and activities it funds.

The current requirements for listing on the Register and maintaining listing aim to ensure high levels of integrity and transparency in relation to what organisations do and how they allocate funds. WA would wish to see these maintained and would be happy for them to be strengthened.

### **Activities undertaken by organisations currently listed on the Register and the extent to which these activities involve on-ground environmental works**

WA believes that donors expect activities carried out by organisations listed on the Register to involve on-ground environmental works and this should be the focus of such organisations.

### **Reporting requirements for organisations to disclose donations and activities funded by donations**

WA believes that there should be a very high level of transparency in relation to donations and activities funded by donations but that the current level of reporting requirements adequately addresses this.

Yours sincerely

Clare Campbell  
Director  
Wildlife Asia