



Minority Report – Nola Marino MHR – Member for Forrest

The Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts in its inquiry into “Australia's biodiversity in a changing climate” was presented with a range of information that outlined the various local approaches to manage the impact of climate change on local environments.

The good work of a range of local stakeholders is to be acknowledged and applauded, and this is recognized in the majority report.

Climate change policy is rightly divided into climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation. Climate change mitigation refers to attempts to limit climate change and its impacts, and has been the focus of activity at the national and international level.

However whilst there are good examples of localized action on preparing for the effects of climate change and the development of adaptation strategies, there is a completely inadequate national response in the same area. I believe we need a national approach to climate change adaptation.

1. The need to focus on climate change adaptation.

There must be a considerable focus on climate change adaptation, which in my opinion has not received adequate attention to date.

The current national agenda of climate change mitigation has completely dwarfed the policy and action on climate change adaptation. This cannot continue if Australia is to adequately manage the effects of climate change into the future.

Finding

Climate change adaptation has been under-prioritised in Australia's climate change response. The decision to remove support for the National Climate Change Adaptation research Facility is regrettable and should be reversed.

Recommendation

Given current world wide emissions growth projections climate change adaptation must be given higher priority.

2. The need to greater engage the Natural Resource Management system in a nationally coordinated climate change adaptation plan.

As evidenced by the Committee in its interim reports, there is a range of at risk ecosystems for which the current management response to changing climate is inadequate.

The current Federal Government vehicle for local environmental action that engages local communities in that action is the Natural Resource Management program. This program was introduced by the Howard Government and under a range of names has been supported by all recent Australian governments.

The good climate adaptation work at a local level should be part of a nation-wide plan, whose ultimate goal would be to future proof vulnerable Australian ecosystems and species against the impacts of climate change.

A national stock-take of vulnerable and at risk ecosystems is vital. An adequate response to those risks is even more so.

This program needs to be focused on delivering climate change adaptation and preparedness strategies that are coordinated at a national level.

Recommendation

That climate change preparation and adaptation is made a primary objective of the national Natural Resource Management agenda.

3. The need to develop proper accountability for invasive species control for land managers.

The majority report of the Committee identifies that weed control is not a success story for land managers across Australia.

This repetitive failure to control invasive weed species must be addressed.

In the South West of Western Australia the long term drying trend was clearly identified as a threat to biodiversity, especially in native jarrah and karri forests. This threat is exacerbated by *Phytophthora dieback* and the invasion of weed and pest species.

Changing rainfall patterns and invasive species are also having detrimental impacts in the Tasmanian Midlands, and New South Wales Snowy River region.

Invasive plant and animal species are also major threats to Kakadu in the Northern Territory.

The feral horse population in the New South Wales Snowy River region is a matter of great urgency that needs to be resolved.

The current systems in place at a state and federal level, including those within the Natural Resource Management program, have not been able to address these issues.

The requirement to control invasive species currently exists in the legislation of most jurisdictions, but needs to be used to greater effect. Because of this few invasive species are actually eliminated or properly controlled. Most simply move down classification lists from required control, via attempted control, to an acknowledgement that they have become endemic.

Finding

The response in Australia to the threat to biodiversity of changing weather patterns and invasive plants, animals and disease has been inadequate.

Recommendation

Include on the COAG agenda the need for the Commonwealth and State Governments to prioritise the containment and/or elimination of invasive species, and that land managers including public entities be required to control identified and targeted invasive species on their lands.

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