

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO ENVIRONMENTAL BIOSECURITY

Submission concerning biosecurity for Australia's high biodiversity islands

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Australia's continental and oceanic islands protect an amazing number and variety of plants and animals. Some of these are endemic or are extinct on the Australian mainland. Australia's already appalling record of 28 (possibly more) mammal extinctions since European settlement would be even worse if not for islands as seven species became restricted to them.

That non-indigenous species are the major threat to island biodiversity is well documented, both for Australia and worldwide. Some species have already been lost from Australia's islands because of invasive species. Despite this Australia does not have a comprehensive, national plan for island biosecurity.

The need for such a plan and recommendations for a cost-effective way forward were provided in a 2010 guest editorial in the journal 'Ecological Management and Restoration'. A copy is attached.

I urge the Committee to consider biosecurity for Australia's high value islands. Traditionally, biosecurity has been considered only between Australia and other countries. If our islands are to be protected, this attitude needs to change.

Attachment:

Nias, R.C., Burbidge, A.A., Ball, D. and Pressey, R.L. (2010). Island arks: the need for an Australian national island biosecurity initiative. *Ecological Management & Restoration* **11**(3), 166–167. doi: 10.1111/j.1442-8903.2010.00545.x