



Australian Academy of Science

Ian Potter House, Gordon Street, Canberra ACT 2601

Secretary Science Policy Professor David Day FAA

12 September 2018

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson
Acting Chair for the Inquiry, Senate Environment and Communications References Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
c/o: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Whish-Wilson

**Re: Senate Environment and Communications References Committee inquiry into
Australia's faunal extinction crisis.**

The Australian Academy of Science welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry on Australia's faunal extinction crisis. Please find the submission attached.

As a developed nation with a unique and rich (megadiverse) fauna, Australia has a global responsibility to protect its species. This responsibility is embodied in international obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other instruments, and national environment legislation, including the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) and similar laws of State and Territory governments. The Academy's submission to this Inquiry focuses on those Terms of Reference where published research can provide guidance and insight.

The attached submission draws on the expertise of the Academy's Fellowship and the members of its National Committee for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation. The submission makes the following recommendations to address Australia's faunal extinction crisis:

- **Increase attention to and funding for ameliorating major threatening processes** – especially land clearance, invasive species and inappropriate fire regimes. Each of these will also interact with impacts of accelerating climate change. Effective management will require a regional, ecosystem-based approach, as allowed under the EPBC Act.
- **Develop and fund priority actions for management of faunal groups beyond birds and mammals, especially fish.** It may be possible to combine recovery actions for groups of aquatic species (fish, turtles, frogs) where there are common threatening processes.
- For priority species across all faunal groups, **update (with stakeholder engagement) and resource Recovery Plans established under the EPBC Act.** Again, it should be possible to achieve efficiencies through multi-species, regional approaches given common threats.
- **The Department of Environment should seek advice from the scientific community** on how advances in technologies and methods for monitoring and modelling can improve “best practice” and create efficiencies for management of threatened species. This should be done at regular intervals to ensure policy makers and managers are informed of, and able to use, these advances to the benefit of Australian fauna. The Australian Academy of Science

National Committee for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation is an appropriate body to provide such advice.

The Academy would be pleased to provide further information or explanation of this submission. Please contact Dr Stuart Barrow () if you wish to discuss this submission further or arrange for the Academy to provide evidence to a hearing of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Professor David Day FAA
Secretary Science Policy