

Name of submitter: Ecological Society of Australia

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*The Ecological Society of Australia Ltd (ESA, [www.ecolsoc.org.au](http://www.ecolsoc.org.au)) is the peak group of ecologists in Australia, with over 1200 members from all states and territories. Our members work in universities and other research institutions, government departments, NGOs, private industry, Indigenous organisations, and consultancies. We are a non-partisan not-for-profit organisation formed in 1959.*

Submission to:  
**Senate Environment and Communications References Committee**  
***Inquiry into the Climate Risk Assessment***

***9 September 2025***

**Summary**

This submission is made in response to the Senate Inquiry into the Climate Risk Assessment. It reflects concerns regarding the delayed release of the completed Climate Risk Assessment report and the implications this has for evidence-based decision making, climate resilience, and public trust.

**Evidence-Based Decision Making**

Ecological science plays a vital role in informing climate policy, land management, and biodiversity conservation. The Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) is Australia's peak body of ecologists, representing over 1,200 members across research, government, and industry. The ESA strongly advocates for evidence-based decision making as a cornerstone of effective governance. The Climate Risk Assessment, reportedly completed but not released, represents a critical piece of national evidence. Its continued suppression undermines the ability of scientists, policymakers, and communities to respond to climate risks with urgency and precision.

**Impacts of Withholding the Climate Risk Assessment**

The decision to withhold the Climate Risk Assessment has significant implications:

- **Transparency and Trust:** Withholding the report erodes public trust in climate governance and raises concerns about political interference in scientific processes.
- **Delayed Action:** Without access to the findings, governments, land managers, and ecological practitioners are unable to prioritise and implement timely mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- **Scientific Integrity:** Suppressing scientific evidence contradicts the principles of open science and undermines the role of ecological research in shaping public policy.

## **Urgency of Climate Action**

Australia is already experiencing severe ecological and climatic disruptions. The ESA has consistently called for urgent, coordinated action to address climate change and biodiversity loss. The release of the Climate Risk Assessment is essential to:

- Guide national and regional adaptation strategies.
- Inform investment in nature-based solutions.
- Support cross-sectoral collaboration grounded in ecological evidence.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Climate Risk Assessment should be released immediately and in full.
2. Future climate-related reports should be made publicly available upon completion to support transparency and timely action.
3. Mechanisms should be established to ensure that critical environmental evidence is not withheld from stakeholders who rely on it for planning and response.
4. Climate risk frameworks must explicitly incorporate ecological risks, including biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and feedback loops.

## **Conclusion**

The ESA urges the committee to consider the serious consequences of withholding climate risk information and to advocate for its immediate release. Ecological science must be central to Australia's climate response, and access to evidence is a non-negotiable foundation for meaningful action.

## **For further information**

The ESA welcomes the opportunity to provide further information to this consultation or to discuss our submission in more detail. We may be contacted using the details below:

Website: <https://www.ecolsoc.org.au/>

Submission prepared on behalf of the ESA by its Policy Working Group and approved by the President, 8 September 2025.