



MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ARTS

Inquiry into Australia's biodiversity in a changing climate

*Chair: Tony Zappia MP
Deputy Chair: Mal Washer MP*

Biodiversity inquiry: first interim report released

The House Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts yesterday presented the first interim report of its inquiry into Australia's biodiversity in a changing climate.

The report updates the House on the progress of the inquiry, focussing on site visits undertaken by the Committee between November 2011 and March 2012.

The Committee has presented the report in anticipation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development being held in Rio de Janeiro next month (Rio+20)—this highlights the relevance of the Committee's inquiry within a broader international framework of biodiversity conservation.

The report sets out the Committee's site visit activities in Southwest Western Australia, the Tasmanian Midlands and Central Plateau, the New South Wales Snowy Mountains region, and Sydney. The Committee decided not to detail broader conclusions or make recommendations at this stage of the inquiry.

Committee Chair, Mr Tony Zappia MP, said that 'while noting the differences across regions and ecosystems, the inspection program has also given the Committee the opportunity to see commonalities in the challenges faced in each region. For example, changes in rainfall patterns, changes in fire regimes as a result of land use and climate-driven factors, and the impact of disease and pests were threats to biodiversity observed throughout various site visits.'

'What is clear from the site inspections is that the effects of climate change on Australia's unique biodiversity are not certain, and not uniform. This is a challenge the Committee will face throughout this inquiry, and it is also a challenge to policy makers and land managers on the ground.'

The Committee will travel to the Northern Territory and North Queensland in July, after which time it will have carried out activities in each State and Territory to gather evidence for this extensive inquiry into Australia's biodiversity in a changing climate.

The first interim report is available from <http://www.aph.gov.au/ccbio>.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Tony Zappia, on (02) 6277 4147 (Parliament House) and (08) 8265 3100 (electorate office)

For further information: please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 4580, email ccea.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ccea>