
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Case Studies on Biodiversity Conservation: Volume 1

**First interim report of the inquiry into Australia's biodiversity in a
changing climate**

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts**

May 2012
Canberra

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Foreword

The world's focus on environmental conservation and sustainable development shifted significantly with the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. One of the key international agreements on biodiversity conservation came out of that summit: the Convention on Biological Diversity. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – also referred to as Rio+20 – will take place on 20–22 June this year, marking 20 years since the 1992 Earth Summit. The Committee's inquiry into Australia's biodiversity in a changing climate is therefore timely, as is the release of this first interim report.

This interim report represents site inspections carried out by the Committee between November 2011 and March 2012. During the inspections, the Committee had the opportunity to hear about the key threats to Australia's biodiversity in various regions, and to see firsthand some of the important conservation work being done on the ground. During the site visits, the Committee was impressed with the expertise, passion and commitment of not-for-profit environmental groups, natural resource management bodies, State government agencies, research institutions, and landholders, all working together to safeguard Australia's precious biodiversity.

Although specific individuals and organisations have been acknowledged throughout the report, I take this opportunity to again thank those who organised the valuable, informative site visits, and who took the time to meet with and brief the Committee. I also appreciate the cooperative and constructive approach my fellow Committee Members have taken in the conduct of this important inquiry.

Tony Zappia MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Mr Tony Zappia MP

Deputy Chair Dr Mal Washer MP

Members	Ms Anna Burke MP (to 7/2/12)	Ms Nola Marino MP
	Ms Jill Hall MP	Mr Wyatt Roy MP
	Mr Harry Jenkins MP (from 7/2/12)	Mr Kelvin Thomson MP (from 25/10/10 to 11/10/11 and from 18/1/12)
	Mr Geoff Lyons MP (from 11/10/11 to 18/1/12)	

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Ms Julia Morris

Inquiry Secretaries Ms Peggy Danaee (from 7/11/11)
Ms Julia Searle (to 4/11/11)

Senior Research Officer Mr James Nelson

Administrative Officer Mr Peter Pullen



Terms of reference

The Committee will inquire into and report on biodiversity in a change climate, in relation to nationally important ecosystems. The inquiry will have particular regard to:

- terrestrial, marine and freshwater biodiversity in Australia and its territories
- connectivity between ecosystems and across landscapes that may contribute to biodiversity conservation
- how climate change impacts on biodiversity may flow on to affect human communities and the economy
- strategies to enhance climate change adaptation, including promoting resilience in ecosystems and human communities
- mechanisms to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services in a changing climate
- an assessment of whether current governance arrangements are well placed to deal with the challenges of conserving biodiversity in a changing climate
- mechanisms to enhance community engagement.

The scope of the committee's inquiry shall include some case studies of 'nationally important ecosystems', as defined by submissions to the inquiry.



List of abbreviations

ACE CRC	Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre
DPIPWE	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (Tas.)
OCBIL	Very old, climatically buffered, infertile landscapes
SOPA	Sydney Olympic Park Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

