



15 May 2012

House Standing Committee on Climate
Change, Environment and the Arts.
ccea.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the House Climate Change, Environment and the Arts Committee at its public hearing on 4 May 2012 for the inquiry into Australia's biodiversity in a changing climate.

At the hearing BirdLife Australia agreed to respond to the following question that we took on notice and to provide some additional material.

Question taken on notice

Ms MARINO: In recommendation 4 you referred to Land and Water Australia. Like you, I saw that as a major loss, particularly given its focus on sustainable land and water use in this arid country that we have. You made some recommendations as to the re establishment of Land and Water Australia and particularly in relation to research organisations. I would be very interested to hear whether you could expand on that particular recommendation for the committee's consideration if that was potentially a greater recommendation to come out of this committee and how you would see that structured, given some of the comments you have made. Do you have any practical examples of where the previous work by Land and Water Australia is not occurring in the same way and how that has impacted? I would be very interested in what you think would work in a practical sense even better than it did previously.

BirdLife Australia Response: BirdLife Australia re iterates its support for the re establishment of Land and Water Australia with an increased focus on investment in research on biodiversity conservation, including in production landscapes.

BirdLife Australia, like many other groups making submissions to this inquiry, has called for strengthening of the National Reserve System and the need for landscape scale connectivity to facilitate species adaptation to climate change. This can only be achieved if biodiversity conservation objectives are incorporated into production landscapes areas that have been subjected to extensive land clearing. A new authority with an expanded remit to include biodiversity could conduct/invest in research to determine how sustainable land, water and biodiversity management objectives can be achieved in agricultural landscapes. This would include socio economic research to determine the most cost effective way to achieve these objectives and how the costs should be shared by the public (which benefits directly from on farm biodiversity conservation) and private landholders (who benefit from improved ecosystems services).

An expanded authority should be based on the Land and Water Australia model with partnerships and formal alliances with research organisations in universities, national scientific organisations such as CSIRO and other groups, such as BirdLife Australia, with a capacity to undertake and implement research. The authority's research program should be developed in consultation with natural resource

BirdLife Australia
Suite 2-05
60 Leicester Street
Carlton VIC 3053
T 03 9347 0757
F 03 9347 9323
info@birdlife.org.au
birdlife.org.au

ABN 75 149 124 774

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managers, communities, non government organisations and other agencies that are working to conserve biodiversity.

Additional material

Examples of where shifts in the distribution of Australian bird species have been attributed to climate change.

As discussed during our appearance before the Committee on 4th May 2012, it can be difficult to attribute changes in species' distribution to climate change alone when there are a number of other factors which may be influencing species distribution. However, species such as the Figbird, Common Koel, Noisy Pitta, Pacific Baza and Beach Stone Curlew (Chambers 2007), Pheasant Coucal, White headed Pigeon and Pied Butcherbird (Silcocks and Sanderson 2007), and some Western Australian seabirds such as the Red tailed Tropicbird, Bridled Tern and Roseate Tern (Chambers 2007) have shown range shifts consistent with those expected under climate change.

Other species such as the Forest Kingfisher and Noisy Pitta are now found in the mountain forests all year, when they previously tended to move to lower elevations in the colder months (Chambers 2007). Some temperate, high altitude species such as the Fernwren and Chowchilla seem to have contracted upland (Silcocks and Sanderson 2007) consistent with changes expected under climate change.

State of Australia's Birds 2007: Birds in a Changing Climate can be accessed on our website at http://www.birdlife.org.au/education/publications/publications/state_of_australias_birds.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at
you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Lau
Acting Head of Conservation

References

Chambers, L. (2007) *Is climate change affecting Australia's birds?* Pp7-9: In Olsen, P. (Ed) *State of Australia's Birds 2007: Birds in a Changing Climate*. Supplement to Wingspan 14(4)

Silcocks, A. and Sanderson, C. (2007) *Volunteers monitoring change: The Atlas of Australian Birds*. Pp 10-11: In Olsen, P. (Ed) *State of Australia's Birds 2007: Birds in a Changing Climate*. Supplement to Wingspan 14(4)