

Supplementary Information

Questions on Notice – page 18.

Ms HALL: My question is about the EPBC Act. Could you give me some details of what process you think should be put in place for the long-term monitoring and auditing? How do you think that that should be done?

Response – Jill Woodlands

This is a complex question to answer so the following are a few main points.

Monitoring needs to be publicly accountable, linked at multiple layers, and build in existing and or available data. There needs to be the right principles in place and an agreed national framework for monitoring which links in with reporting. This needs to be across government to make the right connections and impacts across portfolios.

It must link in with the state of environment and environmental accounts and need to have 2-3 high profile indicators established. This is particularly important given the changes that are proposed with decision making processes devolved to the states. Needs to be progressed through COAG – use existing processes where it is possible.

Need to ensure the most effective monitoring and auditing that picks up all layers e.g

- Asset condition – measure of assets of environmental significance and significantly improve their condition
- Decisions to say no
- Compliance
- Effectiveness of condition
- Recovery planning, threatening processes – have these been achieving their objectives?

Ms MARINO: You touched in your submission on the loss that the abolition of Land and Water Australia has been. You talk about an expanded Land and Water Australia. I would be interested to hear what roles that might include.

Ms Woodlands:

First I would like to recap on the role of Land and Water Australia as I see it.

My understanding is that it was established in 1990 as a rural research and development corporation to foster innovation in Australia's agricultural production systems and funding ceased in May 2009. Land and Water were very successful in leveraging funding from other sources because of its relatively independent charter and mandate to look at things differently. It was a key driver and deliverer of research for cross-tenure, cross-sector and public good natural resource issues that were critical for sustainable landscapes but did not always fit squarely in an industry or private benefit bucket i.e. biodiversity and picked up the public interest areas that fell through cracks because often NRM research is driven by industry. Importantly it was able to broker and coordinate significant partnerships in this area and leverage

investment. It also had the institutional capacity to manage long term research projects, again critical to biodiversity research.

In 2010 the Australian Productivity Commission recommended a significant renovation of rural R&D corporations including reviving Land and Water Australia.

Without the reviving of Land and Water the reduction in long term research could be partly addressed by the **deliberate investment** in research in cross-tenure, cross-sector and public good natural resource issues through existing structures such as CSIRO. Without **this specific investment** there is an enormous gap in research in public good natural resource issues.

Given the **emphasis on biodiversity** in the corridor strategy and the EPBC review it is crucial that there is a reinvestment in public good natural resource issues.

As mentioned in the Conservation Council submission an expanded Land, Water and Biodiversity authority should be based on the model pioneered by Land and Water Australia. The expanded role could include specific partnerships and formal alliances with research organisations in universities, national scientific organisations such as CSIRO, and others with capacity to undertake and implement research. Essentially an expanded role would broaden research out to a wide range of biodiversity issues to determine how best to invest in biodiversity to improve condition. To reiterate we need to move on this quickly , at a great scale to meet the time threats of the effects of climate change.