



Our ref: R91/0146 Out-17091  
Further contact: Kirsty McIntyre  
16 April 2009

Chairperson  
Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change)  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**Submission to the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change) – Managing climate change impacts on biodiversity inquiry**

The Local Government Association of NSW and Shires Association of NSW (the Associations) are the peak bodies for NSW Local Government.

Together, the Local Government Association and the Shires Association represent all the 152 NSW general-purpose councils, the special-purpose county councils and the regions of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. The mission of the Associations is to be credible, professional organisations representing Local Government and facilitating the development of an effective community-based system of Local Government in NSW. In pursuit of this mission, the Associations represent the views of councils to NSW and Australian Governments; provide industrial relations and specialist services to councils and promote Local Government to the community and the media.

The Associations thank the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change) for the invitation to make a submission concerning the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

The Associations are interested in this issue given the potential implications for councils including both current and future management practices and planning processes.

The likely impact of climate change on ecosystems is an area where more information is required and ongoing research needed. A commitment from both the Australian and NSW Governments to monitor and report on changes occurring, and identify potential changes, is required as a matter of priority. Support for research institutions is also essential in ensuring we have the best possible information to plan for any current or likely impact.

NSW Local Government will be seeking information on the likely impacts of climate change on biodiversity from external experts and it will be essential that information is disseminated to councils in a format which is appropriate to them. As key local natural resource managers and planners, councils will require appropriately detailed information in a timely manner to assist them to generate a response.

However, prior to any implementation of adaptation strategies, more guidance on the likely climate change impacts on biodiversity is needed as a matter of priority. Such guidance is required in order for councils to adapt to in a confident, committed and defensible way.

Adapting to climate change impacts in an uncertain environment is difficult for councils. NSW Local Government will require assistance from both the Australian and NSW Governments in order to effectively implement

strategies to adapt to climate change impacts in a timely and cost effective manner. This includes assistance in both the provision of good quality information and data, and resources to ensure implementation.

Adequate funding for adaptation strategies is imperative. In a changing climate, councils will need to build their capacity to respond which will require the allocation of additional investment and resources. This is especially true for smaller, rural and regional councils. Smaller councils may need to commission climate change risk assessments and adaptation action plans as they may not have the staff resources and level of expertise necessary to do so in-house. Regional communities are often poorly resourced owing to a small rate base, their remoteness and difficulty in attracting trained staff. These councils will need considerable assistance in ensuring they have the capacity to adapt to any climate change impacts.

Councils are embracing the management of biodiversity in their local areas through a range of initiatives including land use planning schemes, on ground works, and supporting their local community to undertake actions. However, the interactions between biodiversity and climate change are complex and councils will be looking for support from both the Australian and NSW Governments in order to ensure we can meet these challenges.

The Associations support the work of the Standing Committee and look forward to your findings.

Yours sincerely



Cr Genia McCaffery

**President**

*Local Government Association of NSW*



Cr Bruce Miller

**President**

*Shires Association of NSW*