

Carolyn Littlefair
Senior Committee Officer
Standing Committee on Natural resource Management (Climate Change)
Parliament House
Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000
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Dear Carolyn,

Re: NRCMA submission to the inquiry into managing climate change impacts on biodiversity

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11th March 2009. The Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (NRCMA) is pleased to provide comments in relation to this inquiry.

The NRCMA has facilitated the development of the NSW Cabinet endorsed Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan (CAP). The CAP sets out catchment and management targets, which the Northern Rivers community seeks to achieve in a 10 year timeframe. The achievement of these targets relies upon inputs and responsibilities of the extensive range of stakeholders across the Northern Rivers.

Investment in Information Provision

During the public consultation phase for development of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) the State Government has informed the community about the likely impacts of climate change in terms of rainfall, temperature and the occurrence of extreme weather events. In responding to Federal Government political position on climate change the NRCMA would urge the State Government to build upon this platform and develop an overview document, including mapping, which details where, when and how regional bodies can develop and apply appropriate strategies for mitigation of the impending impacts of climate change. Ideally this would take the form of a comprehensive reference document which would provide the framework for the State Governments investment in climate change mitigation priorities and works over the next 5-10 years and be subject to review at regular intervals.

Adequate Resourcing

Of equal importance is the resourcing of the development and implementation of proposed mitigation and adaption initiatives at a level which is commensurate with the predicted scale of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and those industries which are dependant on biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. In the Northern Rivers, those industries which are likely to be affected by the impacts of climate change on biodiversity include grazing, cultivation and horticulture, aquaculture and tourism.

The NRCMA urges the Inquiry to consider the increasing need and appropriate level of State level Investment in mitigation and adaption measures to assist the Northern Rivers area and the industries which are reliant upon the resilience of these critical environmental services to address likely climate change impacts.

Regional Priorities

During the regional public exhibition of the State Government's Climate Change Action Plan in 2008, it was foreshadowed that environmental services in the Northern Rivers region will come under increasing pressure during a likely influx of climate change refugees moving into the region from other areas of NSW, other States within Australia and also from other countries of the world. At the same time, areas such as the Northern Rivers will feature ever more highly in the production of food and resources in support of this increased and also condensed demographic distribution. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly felt, adequately resourcing these regional areas to plan for and manage these impacts is increasingly important.

At a regional level, the NRCMA considers and mitigates the impacts of climate change on biodiversity over four levels throughout the organisation:

1. The Board of the NRCMA have developed a living definition of resilient landscapes from which to underpin the CMAs strategic approach to investment in NRM.
2. The impacts of climate change on biodiversity are considered throughout the Program Plans for Soils and Landuse, Landuse Planning, Biodiversity, Rivers, Coastal and Marine and Community themes, including the Program Logic models for each of these themes.
3. The NRCMA has a standing Climate Change Committee made up of staff members whose role is to consider the specific implications of climate change for Soils and Landuse, Landuse Planning, Biodiversity, Rivers, Coastal and Marine and the Community as and when may be required.
4. The NRCMA has previously, and will continue to, direct investment into projects which clarify or mitigate the impacts of climate change on biodiversity. At any one time the NRCMA has over 200 projects in operation and some examples of projects follows:

Long Term Marine Monitoring Program

Monitor the resource condition of the NRCMA's marine environment. Marine resource condition monitoring will be essential to understand and mitigate the impacts of climate change and other impacts. Ongoing monitoring is essential for the data available to be useful in marine resource management decisions. Knowledge of terrestrial and marine-related impacts on a range of physical and biological variables associated with near-shore rocky reefs.

Integrated Threatened Species Recovery

Focus on recovery actions for EPBC Act threatened species. Implementation of EPBC Act threatened species recovery actions as they relate to WONs, Cane Toads and emerging threats to World Heritage Areas. This will maintain capacity to implement a Regional Recovery Plan and improve the conservation status of EPBC Act threatened species in the region. The program will also improve the skills and knowledge of landholders.

Strategic Grazing on the Northern Tablelands/Strategic Grazing Throughout Coastal Landscapes/ Wet Grazing

Promoting the implementation of Best Management Practices for grazing throughout the Northern Tablelands, Coastal and Wet Coastal landscapes of the NRCMA to improve the biodiversity and resilience of these landscape areas.

5. The impacts of climate change on biodiversity are considered by the NRCMA in key strategic documents including:

- *Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan* (NRCMA, 2005) available at http://www.northern.cma.nsw.gov.au/region_catchment_action_plan.php
- *Northern Rivers Pest Animal Management Strategy* (2008) available at http://www.northern.cma.nsw.gov.au/publications_project_report_library.php
- *Draft Northern Rivers Invasive Plant Action Strategy* (2008) available at http://www.northern.cma.nsw.gov.au/publications_project_report_library.php

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Royce Bennett
Acting General Manager
23rd April 2009