



Birds Queensland
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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

8 September 2015

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Standing) Bill 2015.

Birds Queensland thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. We are a non-profit organisation that finances its own activities which include conservation and research-oriented projects, educational activities, and activities which provide opportunities to meet with other people interested in birds and their conservation.

Birds Queensland **strongly opposes** the legislation to amend the EPBC Act to provide that only aggrieved persons may make an application for judicial review of decisions made under the Act. Our laws need to be **strengthened**, not diminished, to protect our ever-decreasing natural heritage. Every Australian benefits from our natural environment and with its unique flora and fauna we all have a responsibility to protect it for future generations and ecosystem health. It is Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) that are protected under the EPBC Act, not trivial matters, and these are important to all Australians who should not be excluded from the judicial process of their protection.

Moreover, who else other than the community, including concerned scientists and conservationists, can speak for the threatened animals that have **not** been considered by Government? When the Government fails to protect species and ecosystems that are protected by legislation, it is imperative that the community has the right to take legal action to correct the mistake. Section 487 of the EPBC Act 1999 provides this safeguard.

The motivation behind this amendment is totally inappropriate. It fails to accept that the EPBC Act exists for the protection of the environment. When the Government of the day fails in its responsibilities to protect MNES then it is imperative that the community has the ability to do so through the legal system. This is democracy.

Yours sincerely

Richard Noske, PhD, Grad Dip Ed
President, Birds Queensland