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Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

**Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2017**

Submission from Birds Queensland

This submission is made on behalf of Birds Queensland. The aim of Birds Queensland is to promote the scientific study and conservation of birds, with particular reference to the birds of Queensland. The protection of avian habitat is an important part of the activities of Birds Queensland. The Organisation has 800 members who share an interest in and enjoyment of birds and birding.

Birds Queensland strongly supports this initiative. The loss of habitat along with changes in climate appears to be a major contributor to declines in avian biodiversity (References 1-4). Such declines are further supported by recent anecdotal observations. Further, the fragmentation of remaining habitat also appears to be a contributor. The protection of habitat is a key factor in slowing and halting this decline.

It is recognised that, due to financial constraints, it is not possible for the Government to acquire and manage additional tracts of land. Hence, creating processes whereby owners of land can voluntarily create and manage their land as a reserve has our strong support.

We are concerned that the application process and the subsequent management requirements are not unduly onerous to such an extent that they substantially limit the number and quality of applications and deter landowners from participating.

We are also concerned that conservation interests will be regarded as subservient to State and third party interests. If this process is to work effectively it is of great importance that environmental assets be given equal or greater value than other assets.

We strongly object to the exclusion of restrictions on some petroleum and gas activities such as pipeline licences (Section 27, Nature Conservation Act). The value of a wildlife reserve is potentially diminished by such activity that fragments the landscape thereby contributing to biodiversity loss. Fragmentation of habitat is a major cause of loss of biodiversity (Reference 5). Once a Special Wildlife Reserve has been established, no activity should be permitted that reduces the value of that habitat.

Finally, we believe that there may be benefits in providing landowners with an incentive to participate.

Dr Stephen Prowse
Conservation Officer, Birds Queensland

References

1. <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/c1ed12d3-5960-4b17-92a0-795b9e8bf016/files/birds-05.pdf>. (Accessed 8th July 2017).
2. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/nature/WEDecliningBirdReport99Reid.pdf> (accessed 8th July 2017).
3. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.13743/epdf?r3_referer=wol&tracking_action=preview_click&show_checkout=1&purchase_referrer=www.bees.unsw.edu.au&purchase_site_license=LICENSE_DENIED (Accessed 8th July 2017).
4. <http://www.bees.unsw.edu.au/long-term-study-of-murray-darling-basin-wetlands-reveals-impact-of-dams> (Accessed 8th July 2017).
5. <https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=csiro:EP101968&dsid=DS1> (Accessed 10th July 2017).