

# THREATENED SPECIES SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

*Established under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

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Senator the Hon David Fawcett  
Chair  
Senate Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Fawcett

Having reviewed the transcript of the Estimates hearing conducted by the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee at which I appeared on 24 May 2021, I would like to provide three factual corrections and four clarifications to the Committee.

## Factual Corrections

**Correction 1:** During the hearing Senator Rice asked in relation to what the Threatened Species Scientific Committee is doing with regard to Leadbeater's possum and greater gliders:

*"The greater gliders?"*

In response I said

*"We recommended that a recovery plan be made to the government in May 2016 and we approved a comprehensive conservation advice, which was approved subsequently."*

I wish to correct this answer to: *"We recommended that a recovery plan be made to the government in May 2016 and we recommended a comprehensive conservation advice, which was approved subsequently."*

**Correction 2:** During the hearing Senator McAllister said in relation to prioritising conservation advice over recovery plans:

*"I just want to be absolutely clear, though, about the standing of such advice. Can a minister make a decision that contravenes recommendations from conservation advice?"*

In response I said:

*"The minister can't do anything that's inconsistent with a conservation advice, and must have regard*

*to a recovery plan. However, as I said earlier to Senator Waters, both of these instruments provide mandatory considerations.”*

I wish to correct this answer to: *“The minister can't do anything that's inconsistent with a recovery plan, and must have regard to a conservation advice. However, as I said earlier to Senator Hansen-Young, both of these instruments provide mandatory considerations.”*

**Correction 3:** During the hearing Senator McAllister said in relation to prioritising conservation advice over recovery plans:

*“I just want to be absolutely clear, though, about the standing of such advice. Can a minister make a decision that contravenes recommendations from conservation advice?”*

In response I also said:

*“We have been advised that the difference between the instruments is much less important than the difference in the instruments and what they say.”*

I wish to correct this answer to: *“We have been advised that the difference between the instruments is much less important than the difference within the instruments and what they say.”*

## Clarifications

**Clarification 1:** During the hearing Senator Rice said in relation to what the Threatened Species Scientific Committee is doing with regard to Leadbeater’s possum and greater gliders:

*“I understand that for both those species you've had involvement in the development of draft recovery plans. What is your understanding of where recovery plans currently sit?”*

In response I said:

*“With regard to Leadbeater's possums, we made a recommendation on the recovery plan and its acceptability to us in September 2019, I think—I'm sorry I'm not completely sure of that date. We recommended the draft revised national recovery plan for Leadbeater's possum to the minister. I think it was September 2019.”*

I wish to clarify that September 2019 is the correct date.

**Clarification 2:** During the hearing Senator McAllister asked in relation to the standards being provided to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee ahead of the bill being introduced to parliament:

*“When did you first see them, the ones recently released by the minister?”*

In response I said:

*“On 31 March, I was sent a courtesy email advising me of the standards...”*

I wish to clarify the date is 31 March 2021.

**Clarification 3:** During the hearing Senator McAllister asked in relation to the standards being provided to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee ahead of the bill being introduced to parliament:

*“When did you first see them, the ones recently released by the minister?”*

In response I also said:

*“I apologise that I can't remember the exact date—prior to the Senate inquiry hearing on the Tuesday, which I think was 3 May. Anyway, it was the date of that inquiry.”*

I wish to clarify the Senate Inquiry hearing was held on 4 May 2021.

**Clarification 4:** During the hearing Senator Rice asked in relation to what the Threatened Species Scientific Committee is doing with regard to Leadbeater's possum and greater gliders:

*“The greater gliders?”*

In response I said

*“We recommended that a recovery plan be made to the government in May 2016 and we approved a comprehensive conservation advice, which was approved subsequently.”*

I have provided a correction to this statement in Correction 1 above, but would also like to clarify the approval date for the conservation advice was 25 May 2016.

I apologise for the errors in my answers and trust this further information will be of assistance to the Committee. The remainder of my answers to the questions given at the hearing, are correct.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Helene Marsh.

Helene Marsh AO, FAA, FTSE

Emeritus Professor

Chair

Threatened Species Scientific Committee

23 June 2021