

# THREATENED SPECIES SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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

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Senator Grogan  
Chair  
Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Grogan

On Wednesday 8 November I appeared as a witness before the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee Estimates hearing and following review of the Hansard transcript, I would like to provide two factual corrections to the Committee.

**Correction 1:** During the hearing Senator Rice said in relation to the swift parrot Recovery Plan:

*“I just want to clarify, Professor Marsh, the usual process for signing off on a recovery plan. The usual process is that, once you have signed off on it, there are no further changes made to it before it is released. This plan was not released until September 2023 – almost three years later.”*

In response I said:

*“My understanding is that, if there had been substantive changes proposed to the plan, a minister would have referred it back to us. I can say to you that it has not been referred back to the committee. I can’t comment on the correspondence between the plan that we saw and signed off on and anything that wasn’t released under FOI, because I simply don’t know.”*

I wish to correct this answer to: *“My understanding is that, if there had been substantive changes proposed to the plan, a minister would have referred it back to us. I can say to you that it has not been referred back to the committee. I can’t comment on the correspondence between the plan that we saw and signed off on and anything that was released under FOI, because I simply don’t know.”*

**Correction 2:** During the hearing Senator Whish-Wilson asked in relation to the TSSC’s scientific advice on the Maugean skate:

*“Are you confident that that is the best scientific advice?”*

In response I said:

*“I am. I also say that, as you know, there is a very active recovery plan, there’s an active plan of research, there’s a taskforce et cetera. It is possible—and, I would say, indeed likely—that the scientific advice will improve. I note that it’s on the FPAL, the final priority assessment list, for a listing revision, which is also happening at the same time. In the*

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*process of that listing revision, it is likely that new information will arise that may be reflected in a revised conservation advice, but we talk about the skate all the time.”*

I wish to correct this answer to: *“I am. I also say that, as you know, there is a very active recovery team, there's an active plan of research, there's a taskforce et cetera. It is possible—and, I would say, indeed likely—that the scientific advice will improve. I note that it's on the FPAL, the finalised priority assessment list, for a listing revision, which is also happening at the same time. In the process of that listing revision, it is likely that new information will arise that may be reflected in a revised conservation advice, but we talk about the skate all the time.”*

I apologise for the error 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

Emeritus Professor Helene Marsh AO FAA FTSE FRZS FQA  
Chair  
Threatened Species Scientific Committee

20 November 2023