


Submission No:	101a
Date Received:	13-5-09
Secretary:	

House of Representatives by the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts, Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities Hearing on 28 April, 2009, Brisbane.

Additional statement for submission

2009-05-13

With specific reference to the terms of reference:

- the impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise
- existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking in the catchment-coast-ocean continuum, and
- governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

There is the need for consistency across states and territories to undertake programs to assess and manage the upstream-downstream impacts within coastal catchments, estuaries and coastal zones. These impacts refer to those caused by changing hydrological and meteorological conditions and resulting flooding, storm surge and sea-level rise impacts.

The Commonwealth can lead a response to these complex impacts by developing and using integrated-adaptive coastal catchment-estuary-coastal zone management. This will involve supporting programmes to:

- 1) formulate a national coastal catchment-estuary-coastal zone management plan, and supporting regional integrated catchment-coast management plans developed by a proposed National Coastal Authority, in partnership with the States and the Northern Territory, and using a '4 M' method: mapping, modeling monitoring and management;
- 2) under COAG procedures for national competition policy, provide consistent national guidelines and reporting mechanisms for the management of coastal catchments, estuaries and coastal zones; these can include regional assessments, including economic assessments, management protocols of coastal impacts (flooding, storm surges and sea-level rises) resulting from climate change, and reporting mechanisms;
- 3) establish benchmark coastal catchment-estuary-coastal zone regions to monitor progress in implementing 1) and 2), using evidence-based reporting and current protocols such as those contained in the Queensland Department of Infrastructure and Planning project: 'Identifying & Managing Climate Hazards in Coastal & Flood-prone areas of South East Queensland' which is currently supported by the Commonwealth Government.

These programmes can be undertaken by establishing a National Coastal Authority to work with and provide the States, the Northern Territory and coastal local governments with clear and explicit guidelines to enact programmes. These programmes require prioritisation of actions to address critical issues of:

- water security under conditions of declining drying of the southern states,
- inter- and intrastate migration, and
- coastal zone protection in terms of buffering against sea level rise and storm surges.

With specific reference to the term of reference:

- the environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources

There is the need for urgent action to address the rapid coastal population growth occurring around Australia and its impact on coastal natural resources, in particular impacts on water security, transport and urban infrastructure.

The Commonwealth can lead the response to these complex issues by funding programmes to:

- map and assess migration patterns within Australia and from outside Australia
- determine the water, ecological and societal health footprints of out- and in-migration regions
- undertake economic assessments of the impact of regional, coastal population caps on state, territory and national productivity
- under COAG procedures of national competition policy, provide national guidelines for the determination, management and monitoring of 'population caps' by state governments.

Again, this work can be done by a National Coastal Authority.

Contacts for further information: