

## LIMESTONE PLAINS GROUP

*An alliance of ACT scientists and nature conservation groups advocating responsible and ecologically informed management of grassy ecosystems in the ACT and region*

PO Box 6031  
O'CONNOR ACT 2601

22 September 2008.

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Committee Secretary,

I offer the following submission to the 'Inquiry into the operation of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999'.

### **Heading b.**

The Act has been ineffectual in protecting the two best remaining areas in the ACT of the listed threatened community *Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory* (NTG) from overgrazing by eastern grey kangaroos. I refer to the Defence land at the Belconnen Naval Transmitting Station (BNTS) and the Majura Training Area (MTA).

The Department's acceptance of advice that this process (overgrazing by eastern grey kangaroos) did not constitute an 'action' under the Act rendered the Act impotent, at a time when the refusal by the Department of Defence to manage this listed threatened community for conservation was continuing to exacerbate the poor condition of these grasslands, and leading to a loss of vegetation structure and a diminution of species richness. Six listed threatened grassland plant and animal species occur on these two sites and they have all been further endangered by continuing poor management by Defence (Appendix 1), along with nine woodland species in the threatened *White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland* community at the MTA.

**Heading g.**

The Department has not been prepared to pay for the quality of advice required for biological consultants to prepare expert advice for prospective EPBC Act cases. As a result, few experienced biologists are prepared to take on this sort of work.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Isobel Crawford  
Co-convenor,  
Limestone Plains Group.

## Appendix 1.

### Listed threatened species and communities recorded from the Belconnen Naval Transmitting Station and/or from the Majura Training Area.

The following threatened communities (2) and species (15) have been recorded from grassland and grassy woodland at Belconnen Naval Transmitting Station (BNTS) and/or the Majura Training Area (MTA).

common name	scientific name	national status	ACT status	BNTS	MTA
Natural Temperate Grassland	An ecological community of many species	E	E	Y	Y
Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland	An ecological community of many species	CE	E	N	Y
Canberra Spider Orchid	<i>Arachnorchis actensis</i>	E	E	N	Y
Ginninderra Peppercross	<i>Lepidium ginninderrense</i>	V	E	Y	N
Button Wrinklewort	<i>Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides</i>	E	E	N	Y
Perunga Grasshopper	<i>Perunga ochracea</i>		V	Y	Y
Golden Sun Moth	<i>Synemon plana</i>	CE	E	Y	Y
Striped Legless Lizard	<i>Delma impar</i>	V	V	Y	Y
Grassland Earless Dragon	<i>Tympanocryptis pinguicolla</i>	E	E	P	Y
Brown Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris picumnus</i>		V	N	Y
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>		V	N	Y
Superb Parrot	<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>	V	V	N	Y
5 other woodland bird species less likely to be affected directly by kangaroo grazing:					
Varied Sitella	<i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>		V	N	Y
Painted Honeyeater	<i>Grantiella picta</i>		V	N	Y
Swift Parrot	<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	E	V	N	Y
White-winged Triller	<i>Lalage sueurii</i>		V	N	Y
Regent Honeyeater	<i>Xanthomyza phrygia</i>	E	E	N	Y

#### Legend:

Conservation status: CE = Critically Endangered (Used only by Commonwealth) E = Endangered V = Vulnerable	Y = recorded N = not recorded P = presumed present previously (suitable habitat available)
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