



Birds Queensland
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Australia**

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The State Director

Dear Sir/Madam

With the State election to be held on 31 January 2015, I am writing to you to raise a matter of great concern to our organisation and to seek information from you on your related policies and intentions.

Currently, Queensland's wildlife faces unprecedented levels of threats. Many species are suffering from loss of, or damage to, large areas of their habitats caused directly by human activities, and others are gravely threatened by climate change. Sixteen bird species are listed as 'endangered' and 30 as 'vulnerable' in Queensland. These birds include iconic species such as the magnificent Southern Cassowary, the spectacular Gouldian finch, and the lovely Black-throated Finch, which is threatened by habitat destruction in the Galilee Basin. Queensland already has 'blood on its hands' in that the only bird species to have become extinct on the Australian mainland in historic times was the beautiful Paradise Parrot, a victim of over-grazing by cattle farmers in its homelands of central Queensland. The loss of this species is a blight on the nation, and a particular disgrace to our state, but it happened in an era when we knew almost nothing about the ecology of our wildlife.

Today we know much more about how to protect our wildlife. Our organisation feels very strongly that the Queensland government should take action to prevent bird species like the Paradise Parrot being lost to posterity forever. We also believe that the majority of Queenslanders would support the notion that our natural heritage, which evolved over many millions of years before humans arrived, should be protected from inappropriate and unnecessary human activities. A 'business-as-usual' approach to biodiversity conservation is not sufficient to safeguard their future.

Therefore we are greatly concerned that Queensland governments have severely underfunded climate change planning and threatened species recovery activities in recent years. Annual Reports of the Department of Environment and Heritage grants and subsidies show that \$91,675,000 was spent in 2012, yet only \$31,950,000 in 2014. We are shocked by the fact that our government can spend billions of dollars of public funds servicing the interests of coal corporations (with the associated greenhouse gas emission implications involved in these projects), yet can only afford \$32 million in grants and subsidies to environmentally-focussed community groups. This priority imbalance must change if Queensland is to successfully meet the challenge of climate change and save a rising number of bird species from the threat of extinction.

Birds Queensland is inviting all political parties to provide voters with information about their policies for conservation of birds and their habitat, including threatened and vulnerable species, prior to Election Day. All responses will be posted on our Facebook page and displayed on our website, along with hyperlinks you may provide to relevant policy documents. This will permit our members and visitors to assess the extent to which each party will benefit Queensland birds.

We look forward to your reply by 27 January 2015 and thank you for your valuable time.

Yours sincerely

Richard Noske, PhD Grad Dip Ed
President