



The Leeuwin Group

Media Statement

1st July, 2016

The Leeuwin Group calls for more consultation on the Biodiversity Conservation Bill

In March the then newly formed Leeuwin Group of eminent research scientists expressed its deep concern that the Biodiversity Conservation Bill will not be able to protect WA's unique biodiversity without significant amendment.

Emeritus Professor John Bailey today said that “while new biodiversity legislation is vital for the conservation of the State’s animal and plant life the Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly this week will not be up to the task”.

“There is still time for further consultation to occur before debate in the upper house commences,” he said. The Leeuwin Group remains willing and able to assist all parties in redrafting the Bill to meet best practice standards.

Prof Bailey stressed that “biodiversity legislation comes before the Parliament only rarely and we need to achieve the best that we can before it is too late”.

The Leeuwin Group highlighted its concerns in its March paper and these concerns still require addressing.

The Bill still needs to be amended to mandate the preparation and regular review of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the State.

“The lack of a reporting framework for trends in biodiversity and the effectiveness of management remains as a barrier for science-based management to occur” Prof Bailey said.

He stressed that the provision in the Bill that allows the Minister to approve “taking” a threatened species even if it becomes extinct or to allow a threatened ecological community to be destroyed still must be removed.

He said, “it is essential that these endangered elements of the State’s biodiversity have the highest level of protection”.

The Leeuwin Group believes that protection of the State's unique biodiversity must be underpinned by good science and equally good legislation.

There is no scientific case to privilege fisheries legislation over biodiversity legislation. Prof Bailey said, "the Biodiversity Conservation Bill needs to be amended to prevail over present and proposed fisheries legislation".

"This can be done without preventing the appropriate management of the State's fisheries by the Department of Fisheries".

The Leeuwin Group's previous comments on the Biodiversity Conservation Bill can be found at
<https://www.facebook.com/The.Leeuwin.Group/>

Membership of the Leeuwin Group and short bios can also be found there.

Media contact

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