



## **Statement from the Australasian Ornithological Conference 2023**

The Australasian Ornithological Conference calls on members of the Australian Federal Parliament to deliver good, strong environmental laws in this term of government.

One sixth of Australia's birds are at risk (The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2020). New data collated for the 2023 Threatened Bird Index (TBX), launched during this conference reveals that threatened bird populations have declined by an average of 60% since 1985. This corresponds to a decline of 2.2% per annum since 2000 for the 72 threatened and near-threatened bird taxa included in the index.

Additional data amassed by BirdLife Australia reveals that previously common birds are also now declining as the impacts of climate change, habitat destruction and invasive species take their toll across the country (The State of Australia's Birds 2015).

To tackle this crisis Australia urgently needs strong new nature laws that drive transformational change in the way we manage our environment - to reverse the extinction crisis and drive the protection and recovery of our native wildlife and the places they call home.

New national environment legislation must build on existing protections in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and go further.

In announcing a commitment to no new extinctions and the Nature Positive Plan, the Australian Government took welcome first steps towards delivering the action we need to see.

But with birds such as the Swift Parrot, Western Ground Parrot, King Island Brown Thornbill, Grey Range Thick-billed Grasswren, and Mukarrthippi Grasswren at high risk of extinction in the next decade, new legislation must be delivered in the next 12 months to enable us to turn this trajectory around.

## Statement from the AOC 2023 cont.

Good strong legislation will deliver the following elements:

- Legally enforceable National Environmental Standards, that aren't undermined by the potential use of ministerial discretion
- A fully-independent Environment Protection Agency
- Mechanisms to ensure public trust and confidence in national environment laws, including guarantees of the right to consultation
- Embed First Nations perspectives
- Protection and recovery of species and habitats through properly funded recovery instruments and legally binding abatement responses. Listed species, migratory species and ecological communities must have identified Critical Protection Areas and all of these activities must be adequately funded.
- A rigorous system for the management and use of environmental data and information, monitoring and analysis
- Regional planning must be conservation-led and capable of accommodating new information about threats and be subject to strict integrity measures
- Offsets must be strictly limited and climate impacts considered

Strong federal government leadership and funding must underpin all of these actions.

**Signed by:**