




Australian Government
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

10 April 2008

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts
House of representatives
Parliament House
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No: 2
Date Received: 23-4-08
Secretary: 

Dear Secretary

Thank you for the invitation to provide comment on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and The Arts inquiry into climate change and the environmental impacts on coastal communities.

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) is keenly aware of the impacts that climate change is likely to have on coastal communities. While you state that much of Australia's population and infrastructure is in the coastal zone, it is fair to say that the majority of the FRDC's stakeholders are in this zone. The impacts of climate change aside, the FRDC has previously invested in research to understand the environmental impacts on fisheries resources, such as recruitment, settlement, and dispersal etc. Notwithstanding this investment the FRDC has been actively participating in climate change workshops, meetings and conferences to better understand the potential impacts that climate change will have on our stakeholders. To this end I would like to draw your attention to two current initiatives that the FRDC is involved in that will guide the FRDC's climate change research and development investments. The first is the National Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries (CCRSPI) and the second is the National Climate Change and Fisheries Action Plan (NCCFAP).

CCRSPI is a joint initiative of the Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) and the Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations (CRRDC). The strategy has focussed on developing a collaborative cross-sector approach and identifying areas of common interest across primary industries. This is an exciting collaborative effort between a diverse collection of state and Commonwealth partners. As one of the partners, the FRDC will be whole heartedly supporting its implementation.

The need for the NCCFAP was first formally identified in the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (the Framework), endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in April 2007. The Framework identified the fishing industry as being particularly vulnerable to climate change, and made specific mention of aquaculture, and inland, commercial wild harvest and



recreational fisheries. More recently the current government has made the NCCFAP one of its priorities. Working through the Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF), the Australian Government Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry has taken the lead in the development of the NCCFAP in close consultation with state fisheries agencies, research organisations and stakeholders. The NCCFAP is currently scheduled to be submitted to Natural Resource Management and Primary Industries Ministerial Councils for agreement in October 2008.

While both of the above initiatives are not directed at the 'coastal zone' referred to in your letter *per se*, there are many linkages. For example, gaining an understanding of the impacts of urban development on fisheries and aquaculture under climate change scenarios; and understanding whole of catchment implications of climate change, including what happens after the river mouth will be important. The point of these examples is to highlight that climate change and its affects on coastal communities is not just about the physical manifestations of climate change, such as sea-level rise or storm events. Coastal communities, especially those reliant upon marine resources, will also be affected by the bio-physical, social and economic manifestations of climate change. The FRDC encourages the committee to consider these impacts in its deliberations into climate change and the environmental impacts on coastal communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to your inquiry. The FRDC looks forward to the outcomes of Standing Committee's inquiry.

Yours Sincerely

Patrick Hone
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Fisheries Research and Development Corporation