



**IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas  
Oceania  
(Australia, New Zealand, Island Pacific and Papua New Guinea)**

***Submission  
Ausaid Working Draft  
Environment and climate change strategy for Australian development assistance***  
[wendy.conwaylamb@ausaid.gov.au](mailto:wendy.conwaylamb@ausaid.gov.au)  
Monday, 16 February 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft on behalf of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)<sup>1</sup>. WCPA is the world's leading global network of protected area specialists. The network covers senior people in government, academia and the non-government sectors and aims to add a science-based and apolitical voice to policy debates. There are over 300 members in Oceania.

Unfortunately the Commission only became aware of the document as the deadline approached so I will be brief. I am also new to a role which includes the Island Pacific and PNG, having been responsible for WCPA in Australia and New Zealand for the last four years.

As a global IUCN Commission, WCPA works on building resilience, greening growth and sustaining livelihoods – the stated goals of Ausaid. WCPA is therefore disappointed to see no specific mention of the critical role of protected areas, in all their varied forms, to achieving those goals.

Protected areas sustain and replenish water quantity and quality, fish stocks, timber and forest products and foods. They protect systems, such as mangroves which provide resilience against storm and surge damage. Protected areas are critical to the tourism industry which sustains jobs and livelihoods.

Protected areas also secure carbon holding ecosystems such as forests, mangroves, seagrasses and reefs. Hence they are a part of both mitigation and adaptation strategies.

---

<sup>1</sup> I have also sent the draft letter to the IUCN Secretariat for Oceania in Fiji and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, who both support the letter. Neither organisation had been aware of the draft.

The omission is surprising given that in 2004 the Convention on Biological Diversity COP 7 in Kuala Lumpur adopted a Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) which sets specific, measurable targets and timetables for expanded protected area work. The key goals are for comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas to be established by 2010 for the terrestrial environment and 2012 for the marine environment. Australia and the Pacific nations are signatories to the CBD and held to its implementation.

Last week saw a substantial meeting of Pacific nation representatives in Nadi, Fiji to discuss and workshop the implementation of the CBD PoWPA, as it is known. It was quite clear from this meeting that many Pacific nations are deeply committed to developing their protected area systems, even though as customary title is the norm, the governance of areas will be different to those of Australia and New Zealand.

WCPA believes an important role for Ausaid could be assisting Pacific nations to develop their protected area systems. Australia has a great deal of expertise in protected area planning for both marine and terrestrial environment. We have high expertise in gap analysis, system and site planning, management effectiveness and monitoring and evaluation.

In brief:

- Protected areas, of varied governance, are critical to achieving the Ausaid strategic goals as set out in the document.
- Protected areas are one of the key strategies any nation can take to mitigate against carbon release and to build natural resilience.
- The CBD PoWPA workshop in Fiji illustrated the commitment of the Pacific islands to implement the PoWPA. All PoWPA goals are consistent with the strategic objectives of Ausaid.
- Many of the goals and planned strategies are closely aligned with identified needs to implement PoWPA, education, capacity building.
- WCPA suggests there is more specific mention made of Australian assistance to help the Pacific achieve PoWPA goals.

Sincerely



Penelope Figgis AO  
Vice-Chair, Oceania  
Australia, New Zealand, Island Pacific and PNG  
IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas  
4 Woolcott St., Waverton 2060 NSW  
Australia  
Ph. 61 2 99225275  
Mob. 0416 364 722  
Email: [penelope.figgis@ozemail.com.au](mailto:penelope.figgis@ozemail.com.au)