

13 January 2010

Dear Members,

We are taking the unusual step of writing a personal letter to you to inform you of an issue recently discussed by the Board and Council (collectively the Boards) of our respective organisations, and to engage you in that discussion. Your Boards have been addressing the future of our relationship as two national bird interest groups and are asking the question: should we join forces to establish one, new, stronger organisation? This issue has been raised by Members of each organisation to such an extent that both Boards sense a significant body of support. Both Boards are also very aware that a significant number of people are members of both organisations. However, as it can be difficult to gauge the mood of the majority of our Members, we felt it important to engage you in this discussion at this early stage.

The Boards have only gone so far as to establish a joint Working Group to explore the opportunities and challenges that might be afforded by joining forces. The Working Group will report back to both Boards early in the New Year on their findings and make recommendations on whether to, and how to proceed. In any event, no irreversible action will be taken without the consent of the Members shown by a vote at general meetings of both organisations.

Our two organisations have worked closely and harmoniously on a number of matters of shared interest since entering into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2005. Recent changes to our legal Constitutions have tended to blur the lines of demarcation between us so that our objectives are almost identical. Increasingly we are being asked to justify why there are two national bird interest organisations. We feel there is a case for joining forces to enable us to have a stronger voice for our birds, to reduce administrative costs by removing redundancy that must come from running two organisations, and to provide a better service for all Members. At the same time we feel we hold responsibility for our organisations in trust and must be careful that we do not compromise the most important aspects of the character, values and cultures our organisations have developed over the past 100 years. Importantly, if we are to join forces this should be as a new unified organisation which takes the best from both of us, preserves that which we and our predecessors hold dear, and is stronger and more effective as a result.

We would like to offer you the opportunity to contribute your views to help advise and guide the Working Group over the next two months. The Working Group will report back to the Boards in late February, and we will contact you again after those Board meetings. Your comments should be either mailed or emailed to either Chief Executive Officer:

Graeme Hamilton:

Birds Australia, Suite 2-05, 60 Leicester St Carlton Vic 3053

Email: [ceo@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:ceo@birdsaustralia.com.au)

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Your comments are very welcome. All comments will be considered and will remain confidential.



Alison Russell-French  
President Birds Australia



John Barkla  
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