



Background

The Australian Wetland Alliance (AWA) is an umbrella group of non-government organisations with an interest in wetland conservation. It was established in 1994, with the aim of co-ordinating Non Government Organisation (NGO) contributions to wetland conservation and policy as well as co-ordinating wetland activities at a regional level through its member organisations

AWA has facilitated broad NGO input into Australia's national reporting to each of the Ramsar Conference of Parties (COP) meetings held since the 1996 Ramsar conference in Brisbane. AWA works to ensure Australia's regionally and locally active members achieve input on a full range of issues in wetland conservation, strategy and policy

AWA is administered through a Secretariat, hosted by a member organisation and supported by a Reference Group

Mission

The wise use of wetlands in Australia

Goal

To promote implementation of the Ramsar Convention in Australia, enabling NGO leadership, communication and the development of alliances and networks

Objectives

- To identify and respond to key wetland issues and priorities in relation to the Ramsar Strategic Plan at all levels of government
- Improve communication between wetland conservation groups and the general public at large i.e.(Communication, Education & Public Awareness - CEPA)
- To foster, support and participate in alliances and networks between regional, state and national NGO's for wetland conservation
- Encourage greater allocation of effort and resources (\$) for wetland conservation and management
- Increase government agency commitment to meet their obligations under the Ramsar Convention
- Promote development and implementation of wetland policies and action plans at all levels of government

Membership

Currently AWA has 65 members. AWA membership is open to conservation NGO's, other interested groups and individuals, all of whom are welcome to join the AWA e-mail or mailing list. AWA's current membership includes the full range of wetland NGO's, representing a valuable network that can contribute to Ramsar Objectives to protect all wetlands. A small annual membership fee applies

Funding

In the lead up to COPs 6-9 the Commonwealth Department of Environment & Heritage provided funding to AWA on an intermittent basis to help to support the preparation of NGO formal input on wetland conservation activities in Australia. AWA is seeking greater continuity and certainty in funding to ensure that Australian NGO's and wetland managers are able to maintain timely and well co-ordinated representation around national wetland issues as they arise

AWA Ramsar Convention Role

The Australian Government invites and welcomes NGO input to preparing National Reports to the COP and drafting the National Ramsar Targets. AWA facilitates input from a broad range of local NGOs concerned with wetland issues, as well as liaison with owners of private Ramsar listed sites, complementing contributions from the major organisations

This role has dual benefits:

- 1) showcasing Australia as a country which supports NGO participation and ...
- 2) building capacity in the wetland NGO community to understand and use the Ramsar Convention as a conservation and management tool

Australia is one of the few Ramsar member countries that consistently demonstrates an active and networked wetland NGO community. This fits well with the values and aims of the Ramsar Convention

Contact

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