



June 17 2015

The Hon Rob Stokes M P  
Minister for Planning,  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

BirdLife Shoalhaven, as a branch of BirdLife Australia, continues to maintain a high level interest in the planning progress associated with the catchment of Lake Wollumboola.

Lake Wollumboola itself is a declared Australian “Important Bird Area” and as such is of special significance in its own right to our branch as part of an international network of such areas. BirdLife recognizes that appropriate, sustainable management of the catchment is a critical element of appropriate planning and successful conservation. The status of Lake Wollumboola and developments in planning are a source of regular reporting to the BirdLife Australia network.

**The branch has been following the progress in the Halloran Trust Planning proposal for lands of the Lake Wollumboola catchment and it does concern us that there appears to be a delay in the announcement of the Gateway determination.**

The established, known and verified value of Lake Wollumboola and the critical importance of the catchment to the lake must be recognized as the highest priority to planning. In this sense it is noteworthy that the Halloran Trust Planning Proposal, which was supported by Shoalhaven Council, lacks consistency with known, formal planning strategies and is at odds with previous support of Ministers in your government to protection of the lake.

The recommendation of the Report [December 2014] of your department for Environment Conservation – E2 Zoning of lake catchment is an entirely preferential action to the Planning Proposal and has our support at this stage. The offsets as proposed in the Planning proposal are at odds with BirdLife Australia policy on this matter.

Birdlife Shoalhaven trusts that the Gateway determination is close at hand and that it will be consistent with numerous prior studies, reports, assessments and recommendations.

Yours

*Chris Grounds*

Christopher Grounds  
Conservation Officer – BirdLife Shoalhaven