



ClimateWatch Trail for Parliament House, Canberra

Media Release

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Bird Watching and Plant Spotting on Parliamentary Agenda Today

Bird watching and plant spotting will be put on the Federal Parliamentary Agenda today in Canberra with the launch of a ClimateWatch Trail for Parliament House and the Capital Hill Precinct.

Earthwatch Australia is bringing citizen science directly to the Federal Parliament of Australia with the release of a special ClimateWatch Trail which will provide Members of Parliament, staff, media and visitors to the Parliament the opportunity to help develop a database for scientists on Australia's flora and fauna.

The project will be launched this morning by the Hon. Mark Dreyfus MP, Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister and Cabinet and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

After signing on as ClimateWatchers, guests at the release of the ClimateWatch Trail will take to the Parliamentary gardens for some bird watching and plant spotting using laptops to record their observations.

Richard Gilmore, Executive Director of Earthwatch Australia said, "By observing and recording changes in plant and animal behavior in response to rainfall and temperature around the Federal Parliamentary precinct, people participating in the project will be helping scientists better understand and monitor the natural environment in Canberra."

The Federal Parliament ClimateWatch Trail map, which includes the Capital Hill Precinct where many MPs and others use for walking, running or cycling, will be distributed to Members and Staff in Parliament and will also be available online.

ClimateWatch was developed by Earthwatch, a not-for-profit conservation organisation, aimed at encouraging people to take notice of what is happening in the environment and record information online to contribute to **The Atlas of Living Australia**.

Rio Tinto is the founding sponsor of ClimateWatch and the program is supported by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and the University of Melbourne. Leighton Contractors and Woodside are major sponsors.