



Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc
9 Thompson Drive
Tathra, NSW. 2550

Sustainable future fishing for trout and native fish

11th April 2024

The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Environment and Water
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter MC24-005209 (undated but attached to email “MC24-005209_Pfeiffer concerning the listing of *Galaxias terenasus* (roundsnout galaxias)”) dated 25 March 2024.

Your letter combined two threads of our concerns in respect to *Galaxias terenasus*. This letter seeks further discussion with one aspect only – that related to habitat rehabilitation. The other matter, examining the assessment process itself, will be the subject of separate correspondence

The Monaro Acclimatisation Society is deeply concerned that the act of banning trout stocking within the Snowy River catchment will not in itself ensure the survival of the *Galaxias terenasus*. The conservation advice lists a number of other threatening processes that are impacting the survival of these fish – including climate change (including increased incidence of wildfire), water quality issues usually associated with livestock in streams, sediment events within streams through erosion from cultivation, loss of vegetation and shading and predation from other animals and birds.

In part, your letter states: “[t]he Australian Government is committed to protect the environment for future generations. From 2019 to 2023, \$100 million was invested on projects, including habitat restoration and protection, through the Environment Restoration Fund (ERF). The ERF built on the government’s \$1.1 billion, 6-year investment in the National Landcare Program (now the Natural Heritage Trust). More information is available on the department’s website: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/conservation/environment-restoration-fund>.” When we followed the website advised in your letter, we find that “The Environment Restoration Fund is a four-

year initiative from 2019-20 to 2022-23.” It seems to us that, while a laudable effort, the Environment Restoration Fund is now complete and moreover, there did not appear to be any projects falling within the range of *Galaxias terenasus*.

It seems the future opportunity to support *Galaxias terenasus* is the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT – apparently a new name for the National Landcare Program) at: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/land/natural-heritage-trust>, where we see “the government continues to invest in these priorities through a \$1.1 billion commitment to the next phase of the NHT. The next phase will run over the 5 years, until the end of the 2027-28 financial year.”

Our reading is that the NHT employs the Threatened Species Action Plan to identify the priority efforts:

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/publications/action-plan-2022-2032>.

Stocky Galaxia is one of nine fish receiving effort, but of course this Action Plan predated the recent classification of *Galaxias terenasus*.

We ask if it is possible to fold *Galaxias terenasus* into the Action Plan? We believe that the range of Stocky Galaxia and *Galaxias terenasus* are distinctly different, so action taken in support of Stocky Galaxia may not assist *Galaxias terenasus*.

I have spent some time looking at the South East Region Natural Resource Management Evidence Plan and I note the LLS’s support for the Stocky Galaxia recovery plan. I would like to think that a similar recovery plan could be developed for *Galaxias terenasus*. With this in mind, the Monaro Acclimatisation Society has taken the initiative to write to the General Manager of the South East Local Land Services (LLS) Mr. Luke Pope. We have expressed our desire to partner with the LLS and local landowners to develop a plan to address as many of the threatening processes as is practical, in an endeavour to enhance the population and long-term survivability of the *Galaxias terenasus*.

Without such a plan, the advice we have received from DCCEEW does not fill us with optimism that *Galaxias terenasus* is being taken seriously as an endangered species. We hope that your Department will take seriously our offer of partnership, and can find a way to support our endeavours – so that the native fish can thrive, and the sport of trout fishing can continue within the Snowy River Catchment.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Pfeiffer
President
Monaro Acclimatisation Society