

Dr David Robertson

Director



Dr David Robertson is a senior ecologist with more than 20 years experience in ecological survey and research. David is currently the director of Cumberland Ecology. He has a bachelor of science with majors in botany and zoology and a PhD in ecology.

EPBC/DEH Experience

David has extensive experience with assessments for the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. He has also worked many times with the Department of the Environment and Heritage in Canberra and so has a good number of senior contacts in that organisation.

David has prepared numerous referrals for a wide range of projects since the gazettal of the EPBC Act. These have included referrals for projects in Victoria, ACT, NSW and Queensland and have entailed such diverse projects as coal mines, highways, transmission lines, residential and tourist developments and water supply projects.

David has also worked on complex ongoing assessments that are required for controlled actions to obtain approvals. He has done this for open cut coal mines, transmission lines, tourist developments, golf courses and water supply projects.

David is a good negotiator and presenter – and is adept at giving effective presentations to DEH and other organisations when required. Previously, for a number of projects he has also given direct presentations to Ministers.

David has a thorough understanding of the EPBC/DEH process and can manage the passage of difficult projects in order to gain approvals.

Areas of Expertise

Other recent consultancy work has included:

- Work for Department of Planning on an expert panel, assessing 17 major sites on

the south coast of NSW (ongoing);

- Work for the Land and Environment Court as an expert witness;
- Work for Department of Defense as expert on kangaroo management
- Management of high level flora and fauna investigations for Environmental Impact Assessments;
- Threatened species investigations;
- Development of ecological management plans;
- Habitat reconstruction;
- Development of packages for compensatory habitats;
- Management of negotiations about the level of mitigation measures required for flora and fauna impacts;
- Bushfire assessments;
- Biological monitoring of rivers, streams and lakes and
- Ecological risk assessment.

David is also very experienced at public speaking and has regularly provided expert testimony in court about ecological issues.

In previous work David was employed as the senior ecologist in charge of the Ecological Services Practice for ERM Australia. He also lectured in ecology and aquatic biology at Charles Sturt University, and was also employed as a senior ecologist with the Australian Museum. David also lectured part time in ecology and environmental impact assessment at the Australian Catholic University in Sydney.

David has skills that allow him to work in both aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna inventory, management of threatened species, ecological risk assessment, wetland rehabilitation and management, and ecological research for environmental impact assessment.

Fields of Competence

- Biodiversity issues, flora and fauna field surveys, aquatic ecology, biological monitoring and environmental impact assessment.
- Bushfire assessments.
- Provision of strategic advice relating to the ecological issues that must be considered for land purchase, development and management.

Key Industry Sectors

- Mining
- Power
- Water
- Transport
- Urban Development

Education

Bachelor of Science (Honours), Ecology,
University of Melbourne, 1980.

Doctor of Philosophy, Ecology, University of
Melbourne, 1986.

Key Projects

Environmental Impact Assessment

David has directed numerous large ecological assessments for major EIA projects in a variety of service sectors. These include the power industry, water supply, road construction and mining. Experience in ecological impact assessment for the power industry includes work done for Pacific Power, Transgrid, Powercoal, NorthPower and Powerlink.

Threatened species assessments

David has directed or managed numerous threatened species assessments in Australia and

has been involved in international work on threatened species.

Across Australia, he has completed numerous projects on threatened species in response to state and commonwealth threatened species legislation. Such legislation includes the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, Queensland Nature Conservation Act, 1994 and the Victorian Flora and Fauna Conservation Guarantee 1998 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. International threatened species assessments have been completed in Hong Kong, China and Sri Lanka.

Work on threatened species has included preliminary survey and impact assessment, detailed impact assessment and mitigation, monitoring and plans of management.

Provision of Strategic Ecological Advice

Strategic ecological advice has been provided to aid the selection of potential development sites in Australia, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and China. Examples include: a model to help minimise problems with threatened species issues developed for use by Landcom. Strategic advice about habitat reconstruction and monitoring in the Kam Tin Valley, Hong Kong.

Bushfire Assessments

A range of bushfire assessments have been prepared for sites ranging from small allotments for single dwellings to bushfire management plans for large sites (eg the ADI site at St Marys and Madjura Field Firing Range in the ACT).

Aquatic Assessments

Dr Robertson has written, directed the writing or reviewed numerous wetland ecology projects that involve aquatic habitat assessment, creation and management. Some recent examples include the wetland creation and management projects at the Homebush Olympic Games Venue sites, Coffs Clarence Regional Water Supply Project, the Parramatta Chatswood Rail Link, the proposed

extension to Ravensworth East Coal Mine and the Karuah to Buladelah Pacific Highway Upgrade.

He has worked on a wide range of large EIS projects that have included assessment of impacts, mitigation and monitoring of wetlands. He has also conducted research into wetland ecology and artificial wetland design while he lectured in aquatic ecology at Charles Sturt University.

Dr Robertson has worked extensively throughout Australia on freshwater ecological projects and has considerable experience with macroinvertebrate biomonitoring following the AUSRIVAS protocol. ERM has facilities in-house to undertake the sorting and identification of freshwater invertebrates and other organisms.

He has also gained experience working in Hong Kong for ERM Hong Kong. His experience includes working for the KCRC Habitat Creation and Management Plan, assessments of impacts of construction on rare fishes for the West Rail project, development of mapping units for mapping Hong Kong flora and fauna habitats for the SUSDEV project and for the Green Island Ecological assessments.

Dr Robertson is familiar with the West Rail project and has helped write the Habitat Creation and Management Plan. He has visited the sites proposed for the wetland creation project and understands the habitat requirements of the target species such as the Painted Snipe and the Narrow-mouthed Frog.

Statements of evidence and expert testimony

Dr David Robertson is a highly experienced and credible expert witness and is capable of providing expert evidence in both terrestrial and aquatic areas of ecology. David has provided expert evidence for Senate Select Committees, Australian Heritage Commission, Commissions of Inquiry, Land and Environment Court hearings and at Mining Wardens inquiries. He has written numerous affidavits and technical reports for court and regularly presents in court for cross examination. He also assists barristers by writing questions for cross examining expert witnesses in ecology and by taking Judges and Assessors on field inspections of proposed development sites.