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Associate Professor Andrew Austin
President, Society of Australian Systematic Biologists

12 November 1997

Dear Professor Austin

I refer to your letter of 14 October 1997 co-signed by Dr Tim Entwisle, President of the Australian Systematic Botany Society, and Dr Jack Simpson, President of the Australian Mycological Society, expressing concerns about current and future funding for the Australian Biological Resources Study.

As you would be aware, the Government has been obliged to make significant Budget cuts in order to turn around the unsatisfactory financial situation which we inherited. This has required all departments and agencies, including the Environment Portfolio, to make substantial reductions to their expenditure. The reduced funding to the Australian Biological Resources Study reflects this requirement.

I share your view on the important role of the Australian Biological Resources Study in furthering taxonomy of national significance in Australia, and I am pleased to tell you that I have decided to strengthen the Australian Biological Resources Study by approving a funding increase of \$1.2m for 1997-98. This restores the program to its previous funding base, and is in recognition of the importance of the Study in providing the necessary taxonomic underpinning for the Government's environment initiatives, the Natural Heritage Trust programs in particular.

Thankyou for brining your Society's concerns to my attention and for your continued support for this important program.

Yours sincerely

Robert Hill
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT. 2600.