MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Ian Campbell
Minister for the Environment and Heritage

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GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT LAW

Proposed amendments to Australia's premier environmental legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, were introduced into Parliament today.

The Australian Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, said the common-sense amendments would reduce red tape and streamline the legislation, while improving the ongoing protection of Australia's unique natural, cultural and Indigenous heritage.

"The EPBC Act is world-class legislation which has delivered major environmental achievements over the last six years but there is room to make the Act even better," Senator Campbell said.

"The Australian Government is streamlining the Act with a series of amendments that will improve environmental protection by focusing more on outcomes than process while maintaining our strong commitment to protecting Australia's unique and iconic natural, cultural and Indigenous heritage.

"The improvements to the Act will provide development certainty for major projects by creating long-term certainty and enable the Australian Government to be more strategic and flexible in protecting the environment and strengthen the Act's compliance and enforcement measures.

"The Government will be able to make more timely decisions on projects and there will be less duplication between Australian Government and State processes.

"Changes to the Act will allow greater strategic consideration of developments – which means that their impact on the environment will be considered not just on an individual project basis, but also in local and regional contexts," Senator Campbell said.

"The amendments will increase public access to information and documentation used as part of the approval process, including publishing development details and setting time limits on publishing applications.

The amendments will also allow the Minister to take a more strategic approach towards listing heritage places and threatened species.

They will strengthen compliance and enforcement measures by making it easier to take action against people who breach the Act, and establishing new enforcement options as an alternative to expensive court proceedings.

Further information about the proposed amendments, including the complete list of amendments is available at: www.deh.gov.au/epbc.

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