



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW GUIDELINES HELP MEET NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

Important information is now available to help anyone planning developments that could affect nationally protected environments or species.

Under national environment legislation (the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) any proposal likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance needs to be assessed by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The department's manager of strategic approvals and legislation Mark Flanigan, said a range of new threatened species and ecological communities policy statements were designed to help developers and consultants determine whether their activities are likely to have a significant impact and need to be referred to the department

"These policy statements provide information on a diverse range of protected species, including the growling grass frog, black-throated finch, golden sun moth, and spiny rice-flower," he said.

"They document species biology, ecology and threats gathered from the latest scientific literature, and expert opinion.

"The development of species specific advice is an initiative of the Australian Government designed to help provide increased certainty to the administration of the EPBC Act.

"Making the basis for our decisions more transparent is good for both developers and the environment. This is a work in progress and over time we will produce more policy statements covering a range of species."

More policy statements are under preparations, including striped legless lizard, water mouse, Murray cod, Macquarie perch, northern quoll, and swift parrot

Environmental Scientist at Aurecon Canberra, Cormac Farrell, said the guidelines are invaluable in project planning.

"We do environmental assessments for a range of projects including roads and infrastructure, and routinely use the guidelines, which we find really useful," he said.

"They provide detailed information on the environmental values we need to focus on, not only saving us time and effort, but also ensuring better results by enabling us to tailor environmental solutions to each project."

Matters of national environmental significance are: world and national heritage sites, wetlands of international importance, nationally threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species, Commonwealth marine areas, and nuclear actions.

The new policy statements are available at www.environment.gov.au/epbc/guidelines-policies.html

To receive email updates on new information about the EPBC Act go to www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/subscribe.html