



EPBC ACT – RECOVERY ACTION FOR THREATENED SPECIES AND ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

Amendments to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) provide greater flexibility in responding to changing conservation needs for nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.

Importantly, the amendments change the focus from recovery plans to recovery ‘action’.

The changes, which commenced on 19 February 2007, are designed to ensure the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (the Minister) can make a timely initial decision on the recovery action for a species or ecological community.

The key changes to the taking of recovery action are:

- the Minister is required to ensure there is approved conservation advice at all times for each listed threatened species and ecological community
- the decision whether to have a recovery plan is to be made within 90 days of a species or ecological community being listed under the EPBC Act
- the Minister can decide at a later date that a recovery plan is required or a recovery plan in place should no longer continue *and*
- greater flexibility in the type of recovery plan being prepared.

Approved conservation advice

The approved conservation advice will contain information on key threats to the species or ecological community and actions needed to aid the recovery of the species or

ecological community, as well as a statement of priority for additional recovery action, such as the development of a recovery plan. The approved conservation advice can be fed directly into natural resource management plans and investment strategies rather than waiting for the development of a recovery plan.

Recovery plans

Taking into account advice from the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (the Committee), the decision whether to have a recovery plan is required to be made by the Minister within 90 days of the species or community being listed under the EPBC Act (except where the species is listed as ‘extinct’ or ‘conservation dependent’). If a recovery plan is required, it must be in force within three years.

The amendments also provide the Minister with the discretionary power to decide at a later time that a recovery plan should be developed for a listed threatened species or ecological community. Alternatively, the Minister may decide that a recovery plan in place for a listed species or ecological community should not continue (however the listing advice will still remain). In making the decision that a recovery plan should not continue the Minister must seek both public comment and advice from the Committee before a final decision is made.

Other changes to the EPBC Act will permit greater flexibility in the type of recovery plan being prepared. For instance the Minister may undertake regional recovery planning for a listed threatened species or ecological community.

Further information about the EPBC Act is available from the Department of the Environment and Water Resources web site www.environment.gov.au/epbc, or by contacting the Department’s Community Information Unit, email ciu@environment.gov.au, or freecall 1800 803 772.

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