



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION LAW INTERIM REPORT IDENTIFIES MAJOR THEMES FOR REVIEW**

The independent review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), the Australian Government's central piece of environmental law, has reached a significant milestone with the release of an interim report.

Reviewer Dr Allan Hawke said the interim report pulls together the key issues raised through public submissions and consultations to date.

"There has been a big response to the review so far. This interim report identifies the major themes that have been raised and seeks to provide focus for the way forward in this review," Dr Hawke said.

"The aim of the interim report is to stimulate discussion as we consider some substantial issues relating to the Act and the extent to which it is achieving its purpose. There are no conclusions or recommendations at this stage.

"I encourage interested parties to respond to the interim report. It identifies a number of specific areas where further input is welcome. The aim is that submitters will engage with the choices raised in the report and present ideas about their possible implementation," he said.

Key areas for further consideration include:

- the purpose of the Act;
- the division and harmonisation of responsibilities for the environment between the Commonwealth and the states and territories;
- the appropriateness of the current matters of National Environmental Significance as triggers under the Act and proposals for the inclusion of additional triggers;
- alternative approaches to biodiversity conservation;
- improved arrangements for performance auditing and compliance; including for Regional Forest Agreements and other bilateral agreements;
- the scope for review of decisions made under the Act; and
- opportunities for streamlining environmental regulation.

It is a statutory requirement that the Act is independently reviewed every 10 years.

Upon completion of the review Dr Hawke will present his findings to Environment Minister Peter Garrett. The review is due for completion by the end of October 2009.

The interim report can be found at:

[www.environment.gov.au/epbc/review/publications/interim-report.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/review/publications/interim-report.html)

**Media enquiries: 0417 047 990**