



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

The Hon Warren Snowdon MP

Federal Member for Lingjari

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TOUGH MEASURES PLACED ON TIWI PLANTATIONS

Environment Minister, Peter Garrett, today announced a raft of tough measures, including up to \$2 million for remediation works, to be imposed on forestry operations at the Tiwi Islands, Northern Territory, following a breach of approval conditions.

Mr Garrett said clearing carried out at the plantations between 2004 and 2006 had encroached on required buffer zones which protected important rainforests and wetlands.

“Any action which impacts on a matter of national environmental significance as defined under the national environment legislation is something which I take very seriously and the new conditions I am announcing today reflect that. In particular, the forestry operator will be required to undertake and pay for comprehensive remedial action.

“My department has undertaken investigations into these breaches, and following an admission by the company involved regarding the detail of the breaches, I have imposed new conditions requiring measures to remedy the damage done, and for additional and ongoing environmental benefits to the area.”

Mr Garrett said that as well as adding new conditions to the operator’s existing federal approval, a \$1million bond must be posted by the company to ensure the necessary remediation works were completed.

“The new conditions require the operator to fix all incursions into the rainforest and wetland buffers and I have also required the operator to pay a financial contribution of \$1.35 million, over three years, to the Tiwi Land Council for use in the Indigenous Rangers Program. This funding will support the rangers to carry out environmental works and projects, including the control of feral pigs and exotic grasses.

Federal member for Lingjari, the Hon. Warren Snowdon MP, said it was a positive outcome for the people of the Tiwi Islands.

“This extra commitment of funds will help the Tiwi Land Council to manage the environment, and will ensure that jobs will stay,” said Mr Snowdon.

The Tiwi Islands plantation project involves clearing native forests to establish up to 26,000ha of hardwood *Acacia mangium* plantations on western Melville Island in the Tiwi Islands group.

The project’s approval stipulated that clearing was not to occur within set buffer zones designed to protect important rainforest and wetland habitats used by threatened species protected under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The joint initiative of Sylvatech and the Tiwi Land Council was approved in August 2001.