



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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## **EPBC ACT UNDER INDEPENDENT REVIEW**

Environment Minister, Peter Garrett tonight used a speech to the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand Annual Conference to announce that the national environment legislation – the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* – would undergo independent review.

Mr Garrett said the review was the first since the Act commenced operation almost a decade ago and comes at a critical time for the nation as the threat of climate change and environmental degradation put some of our most important natural assets at risk.

“From the savannahs of the north, to the Great Barrier Reef and down to the rainforests of Tasmania – we all have a responsibility to protect our environment and rich biodiversity and this review will help ensure that we have the settings and balance right.

“The Rudd Labor Government is alive to the threats and to the challenges ahead, and this is a timely opportunity to work with stakeholders across the nation and hear their views about the operation of this important piece of legislation. .”

Mr Garrett said the review was a statutory requirement and would be led by Dr Allan Hawke and an expert panel comprising the Hon Paul Stein AM, Professor Tim Bonyhady, Professor Mark Burgman and Ms Rosemary Warnock.

“This panel, led by Dr Hawke, will assess the effectiveness of the Act in meeting its objectives, including: the protection of the environment, biological diversity and natural and cultural heritage.

“They will also examine the way federal legislation interacts with relevant state and territory laws with a view to ensuring that environmental regulatory regimes in different jurisdictions are harmonized to operate in a streamlined and efficient manner.”

Mr Garrett said to ensure consideration of a wide range of views, public submissions would invited up until the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, with details on how to participate in the review available at [www.environment.gov.au/epbc/review](http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/review).

The review will be completed by 31 October 2009.