

National Parks Australia Council

Working together for nature conservation areas



The Senate Standing Committee
on Environment and Communication Legislation Committee
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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15th January 2014

Dear Committee Secretariat,

National Parks Australia Council Inc

Submission to

The Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communication Legislation Committee: Inquiry into the Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2013

Thank you for the invitation to provide a submission to the Committee regarding the inquiry into the Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2013.

The National Parks Australia Council Inc (NPAC) is the peak national body for national park and protected area matters in Australia. NPAC is a national federation of state-based organisations which have a specific interest in national parks (both terrestrial and marine). The member organisations are:

- National Parks Association of the ACT,
- Victorian National Parks Association,
- National Parks Association of NSW,
- National Parks Association of Queensland,
- Tasmanian National Parks Association; and
- Nature Conservation Society of South Australia.

Submission

The text of the first reading of this bill removed all requirements for the Minister to have regard to any approved conservation advice when making a decision in accordance with (in particular) s139 of the EPBC Act.

The third reading text restricts this change to decisions made prior to 31 December 2013. NPAC's understanding is that this effectively reduces the scope of the legislation to that of removing grounds for further appeals against one particular approval, the Shree Minerals Mine in the Tarkine region of Tasmania.

NPAC considers it to be totally unacceptable that the government even contemplate that, in any circumstances, the Minister should not be required to have regard to any approved conservation advice when



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making a decision in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act. NPAC therefore considers that, while the restriction of the amendments to decisions made prior to 31st December 2013 is an improvement, the amendments relating to approved conservation advice listed in Schedule 1 of the Bill are inappropriate and unnecessary, and that the Bill should not proceed.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Prior
President
National Parks Australia Council

