

**ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL (NO. 1) 2006**

Australia's environment and heritage are to be shared by all Australians and need maximum protection.

Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage claims:
The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 to make it more efficient and effective, to allow for the use of more strategic approaches and to provide greater certainty in decision-making.

However, the Bill gives the Minister too much discretionary power and reduces accountability. Our environment and heritage are to be shared by all Australians, and it is not in the interests of all Australians to allow the Minister to make wide-ranging discretionary decisions with little accountability.

The Bill gives the Minister discretionary power over the nomination of places for the National Heritage List. The Bill allows the Minister to decide arbitrarily on a narrow heritage theme to be given priority. The Bill enables the Minister to reject nominations without due process. This is not accountable. This is not in the interests of protecting Australia's environment and heritage.

The Bill does not address the following key environmental issues facing Australia:

- * Climate change;
- * Protection of biodiversity and threatened species;
- * Restoring inland rivers to health;
- * Reducing greenhouse emissions;
- * Expansion of renewable energy.

These issues are closely connected. And it is these issues that Governments at all levels need to focus on to ensure that maximum protection is given to Australia's environment and heritage.

David Matheson