



23 March 2021

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Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
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Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Standards and Assurance) Bill 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Standards and Assurance) Bill 2021*.

This submission is provided on behalf of both the Property Council of Australia and the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) National – who collectively represent the full spectrum of the nation’s urban development sector.

We have had the opportunity to actively engage in the consultation undertaken by the Independent Review into the EPBC Act, chaired by Professor Graeme Samuel – and appreciate consultation on the legislation now before the Senate.

The Property Council and UDIA National welcomed the review and potential for legislative, regulatory and administrative reform of the EPBC Act as an opportunity to better balance economic, social and environmental objectives and outcomes.

This is essential given:

- The housing and construction sector accounts for approximately 7.5 per cent of the nation’s economic output – and directly and indirectly generates 750,000 jobs
- There is a consensus among all three tiers of government that peri-urban growth is essential to help meet the demands of growing state and local communities
- The industry fully supports the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) as it is the best approach to align environmental goals with economic and social objectives
- The industry makes a disproportionately strong contribution to creating jobs, 9 FTE per million dollars spent, and supporting Australia’s economic recovery from COVID-19.

It is also worth noting that the property industry is the largest user of the assessment and approvals pathways available under the existing Act – accounting for 27 per cent of all referrals in 2018-19.

We believe the principles outlined in the Bill are sound and consistent with the objectives of the reform agenda. Its benefits include:

