



Friends of Clontarf Hill and Adjacent Bushland Inc

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Friends of Clontarf Hill (FoCH) is a group that has been operating since 1992. We are a small group of people dedicated to the protection and enhancement of remnant bushland in Fremantle, Western Australia.

We wish to comment on the Amendment to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to: provide that, where an approval bilateral agreement declares that an action in a class of actions does not require approval, the action may not be referred to the minister for assessment and approval under Part 7 of the Act; enable the minister to complete an assessment and approval of an action where a bilateral agreement with a state or territory is suspended or cancelled, or an approval bilateral agreement otherwise ceases to apply to a particular action; remove the current prohibition on approval bilateral agreements applying to an action that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on water resources (the water trigger); allow the minister to accredit a broader range of state and territory approval processes for the purposes of approval bilateral agreements; enable the states and territories to make minor changes to environmental assessment processes without the need for the amendment of a bilateral agreement or the re-accreditation of a management arrangement or authorisation process; and make technical amendments in relation to the making and operation of bilateral agreements.

It is our view that:

- This is an extremely poor process.
- Legislative reform should not be rushed through prior to the release and consideration of the final report of the Samuel Review of the EPBC Act
- Any EPBC legislation amendments should include an independent regulator and strong national environmental standards, put together as a package to Parliament
- Any new national environmental standards should be made available for public scrutiny before being put to Parliament.
- Establishing this committee to have hearings and report in only two weeks is a box ticking exercise, and does not enable proper scrutiny or accountability.
- Places You Love are continuing to call for the Government to publicly release the Final Report of the EPBC review before any further discussion is undertaken.
- We also urge the Government to bring forward a full package of reforms to be considered by Parliament together, including a full suite of strong legally enforceable National Environmental Standards; an independent regulator for compliance and enforcement; and the robust accountability and transparency requirements for government decision making.

Yours sincerely,
Christine Duckham
Chair, Friends of Clontarf Hill and Adjacent Bushland Inc.