



Premier of Queensland

For reply please quote: *ET/AJ – TF/14/10359 – DOC/14/80649*

30 MAY 2014

Senator John Williams
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and
Communications Legislation Committee
Parliament House
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Dear Senator

Thank you for your letter of 16 May 2014 inviting the Queensland Government to provide a written submission to your committee's Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Bilateral Agreement Implementation) Bill 2014 and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Cost Recovery) Bill 2014.

On 18 October 2013, the Prime Minister and I, along with our respective environment Ministers, signed a memorandum of understanding which set out our commitment to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation on the environment and to minimise costs to business while maintaining high environmental standards. This reflected our shared intention to deliver a one-stop shop for environmental approvals under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), removing unnecessary duplication in assessment and approvals.

In accordance with the memorandum, we have since negotiated assessment and approval bilateral agreements which deliver a more efficient, timely and effective process for major projects. The two Bills, which are the subject of your inquiry, assist in delivering on this objective and are supported by the Queensland Government.

If we were to express any reservation, it is that the Bills do not go far enough in removing unnecessary complexity and duplicative processes, reducing approval timeframes, and providing regulatory transparency in decision making. The EPBC Act is a long, highly detailed and prescriptive piece of legislation with a strong emphasis on process rather than outcomes. To maximise certainty and red tape reduction for Queensland developments, while maintaining high standards of environmental protection, further reform of the EPBC Act is justified and, in my view, long overdue.

Yours sincerely