

Senate Committee:

To protect the biodiversity of Australia, which belongs not to any of us but to all future generations of Australians, there must be a truly independent assessment of all projects that could impact Matters of National Environmental Significance. As our only nationally elected forum, the Federal Government is responsible for protecting these Matters of National Environmental Significance for all Australians. It would be a grave embarrassment if the Federal Government handed over any part of this responsibility to the States. We are Queenslanders, but we are Australians first. The biodiversity of ALL States belongs to us all.

If any part of the Federal Government's responsibility for protecting these Matters of National Environmental Significance is given to the States, or to any other organisation, then how can the Federal Government guarantee that there has been an independent assessment of the potential threat to these Matters of National Environmental Significance? It cannot guarantee this.

Each time that the Federal Government overturned a State initiative in order to protect these Matters of National Environmental Significance is a clear demonstration of the importance of this uniquely Federal power. To hand over this power to the States is to declare that all these instances were Federal mistakes.

The process is currently structured to provide Federal oversight of State actions that may not be in the interest of all Australians. Even if everyone in Tasmania wanted to destroy the last habitat of the Tasmanian Devil, they should be prevented from doing so by the Federal Government. Let the States look after State issues and the Federal Government look after Federal issues - that is their job.

Sincerely,

Shawn Jarvey