

To the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications,

- I oppose the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Standing) Bill 2015 and ask that you recommend this Bill not be passed
- I do not support this Bill's aim of stopping the public and groups from accessing the courts to review the legality of major projects and government decisions, and to uphold environmental laws where the Government fails to do so.
- 'Public interest litigation' is very important and a well-recognised part of our legal system. It is undertaken by concerned groups and individuals on behalf of our wildlife and important landscapes that cannot represent themselves in court.
- The ability to access the courts should not be restricted to groups or individuals whose private property is impacted by a project as this Bill suggests.
- Being able to bring legal cases in the public interest recognises that the public still care about the future of places like the Great Barrier Reef or species such as the koala despite not living right next door to a development or mine, or having private interests impacted.
- The Attorney General is wrong when he suggests that environment groups are waging 'lawfare' on economic developments. Out of 5,500 projects since the provision was placed in the Act, only 22 have ever been challenged in court and only 2 projects have ever been stopped as a result of a court case.
- We need to be strengthening environmental laws and not weakening them. We should be empowering people to protect the natural world for generations to come.
- The proposed bill is an attack on democracy and on the individual legal rights of all Australians
- Such an amendment will set back Australian environmental law many decades
- The result of such an amendment will be the unimpeded and ongoing destruction of Australia's already diminishing wildlife and wild places.