

Submission on Draft Bilateral Assessment Agreement between the South Australian and Australian Government

27th May 2014

From Dr Catherine Pye

To whom it concerns,

I do not support the use of Bilateral Agreements in Australia.

I do not support this Draft Bilateral Assessment Agreement (Draft Agreement) for the following reasons.

- There is no need for them, as there is minimal evidence of delay and duplication by the Commonwealth and the States as was found by the Senate Environment and Communications Committee in March 2013
- I believe the Commonwealth needs to maintain powers and assessment of the impact of actions on Matters of National Significance such as the large coal, coal seam gas, unconventional gas projects, water trigger Act, Great Barrier Reef, Great Artesian Basin, Murray River, World Heritage sites, Ramsar Wetlands and Marine Parks

Re SA

- I don't believe SA can adequately assess impacts concerning these Matters of National Significance and especially projects that impact across its land and sea borders
- I believe SA lacks the resources, staff, skills and regulations.
- In SA our recent State of Environment Report demonstrates that SA has declining environmental health and loss of biodiversity and increasing threatened species.

I am concerned that the Draft Agreement does not meet the Criteria for the EPBC Act. With respect to this I feel that the Ministers are unable to:

- o Manage World Heritage properties within SA
- o Management of Ramsar Wetlands – which are already declining in South Australia especially in the Coorong
- o Enhance conservation of Listed Threatened species and threatened ecological communities
- o Enhance conservation of listed threatened migratory birds – already declining in SA.

I don't believe there is adequate protection of our environment and biodiversity in the Draft Agreement and I believe the focus needs to be on environmental protection rather than economic gain.

If the Draft Agreement goes ahead, and I am opposed to this, then I am further concerned:

- That the Draft Agreement gives the powers to process Matters of National Significance and major projects to the SA Minister for Planning and the SA Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy.
- I believe this is a conflict of interest especially with respect to mining exploration and production licenses.
- The role of the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, under the Mining Act 1971 is to promote mining over sustainability, environment and biodiversity. This is in direct conflict with the role of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation and the EPBC Act.
- I therefore believe that dealing with Matters of National Significance must rest with the SA Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Catherine Pye

MBBS, GP