

Advisory report on the:

Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2011

- 1.1 On Thursday 15 September 2011, the House of Representatives Selection Committee report referred the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2011 (the 2011 Bill) to the House of Representatives Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Committee (the Committee) for inquiry. On 22 September 2011, the House of Representatives Selection Committee amended its original referral, to set a reporting date of 2 November 2011. The Bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 12 September 2011 by the Hon Tony Abbott MP.
- 1.2 The 2011 Bill is similar to two bills introduced into the House of Representatives in 2010, also by the Hon Tony Abbott MP. The first was introduced on 8 February 2010 (during the previous Parliament); the second was introduced on 15 November 2010. The latter was titled the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 (the 2010 Bill). The 2010 Bill was referred by the House of Representatives Selection Committee to the House of Representatives Economics Committee for inquiry and report on 17 November 2010. The report of that inquiry was tabled on 12 May 2011.
- 1.3 In addition, two similar bills were introduced into the Senate by Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion: the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2010 [No. 2] on 23 February 2010, and the Wild Rivers (Environmental Management) Bill 2011 [No. 2] on 10 February 2011. These bills were both referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, which reported on 22 June 2010 and 10 May 2011 respectively.
- 1.4 Furthermore, on 24 November 2011, the House of Representatives Selection Committee referred the 2011 Bill to the Standing Committee Social Policy and Legal Affairs.
- 1.5 Whilst recognising that the 2011 Bill has been referred to an alternative committee, some Members of the Committee wished to briefly note the following workability issues in the Bill (several of which have already been raised in previous parliamentary inquiries): ownership definitions; dispute resolution; employment guarantees; and the creation of different tiers of land rights, which were highlighted to the Committee. Others felt the Bill had been adequately dealt with at Committee level.

- 1.6 Given the fact that the 2011 Bill has now been referred to an alternative committee, the Committee has resolved to conclude its inquiry into the 2011 Bill with this report.

Hon Dick Adams MP

Committee Chair

8 February 2012