



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for the Environment

24 MAR 2015

Mr Alex Hawke MP
Chair
House Standing Committee on the Environment
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hawke

Thank you for your recent letter seeking an inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations.

In accordance with Standing Order 215(b) of the House of Representatives, I write to request that the Committee conduct an inquiry in the following terms:

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment will inquire into and report on the administration and transparency of the Register of Environmental Organisations (the Register) and its effectiveness in supporting communities to take practical action to improve the environment.

The Inquiry will have particular regard to:

- *the definition of 'environmental organisation' under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, including under Subdivision 30-E;*
- *the requirements to be met by an organisation to be listed on the Register and maintain its listing;*
- *activities undertaken by organisations currently listed on the Register and the extent to which these activities involve on-ground environmental works;*
- *reporting requirements for organisations to disclose donations and activities funded by donations;*
- *the administration of the Register and potential efficiency improvements;*
- *compliance arrangements and the measures available to the Department of the Environment and the Australian Taxation Office to investigate breaches of the Act and Ministerial Guidelines by listed organisations; and*
- *relevant governance arrangements in international jurisdictions, and exploring methods to adopt best practice in Australia.*

The Register of Environmental Organisations plays an important role in Australia's actions to improve the environment, supporting local communities to undertake on-ground environmental works. The purpose of this inquiry is to ensure the Australian Government continues to administer this act with best practice and to ensure it remains focused on supporting communities to take practical action to improve the environment.

Officers of my Department will be available to provide briefings and support to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt

24 March 2015

Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Hunt

As of late, there has been significant coverage around the deductible gift recipient status of environmental groups who misuse their privileged position to fund illegal activities and engage in political activism. Currently, eco-charities are granted the same rights permitted to other charities, including tax-deductable donations, which are generous concessions from the taxpayer. As Chair of the House Standing Committee on the Environment, I have been in discussion with some members of the Committee and members of the House of Representatives surrounding this serious issue. Due to these concerning discussions whilst in consultation with colleagues, I write to request a reference from you for the Committee to conduct an inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations, in the following terms:

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment will inquire into and report on the administration and transparency of the Register of Environmental Organisations (the Register) and its effectiveness in supporting communities to take practical action to improve the environment.

The Inquiry will have particular regard to:

- the definition of 'environmental organisation' under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, including under Subdivision 30-E;
- the requirements to be met by an organisation to be listed on the Register and maintain its listing;
- activities undertaken by organisations currently listed on the Register and the extent to which these activities involve on-ground environmental works;
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- the administration of the Register and potential efficiency improvements;
- compliance arrangements and the measures available to the Department of the Environment and the Australian Taxation Office to investigate breaches of the Act and Ministerial Guidelines by listed organisations; and
- relevant governance arrangements in international jurisdictions, and exploring methods to adopt best practice in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Hawke MP
Chair, House Standing Committee on the Environment
Federal Member for Mitchell