

MEDIA RELEASE

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EPBC REFORMS CAN FULFIL PROMISE OF STREAMLINED ASSESSMENT

Reforms to achieve streamlined environmental assessments for major projects is within reach following release of an independent review into the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, according to the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA).

The Commonwealth Government has today released interim findings from the 10-year review of the Act by Professor Graeme Samuel, as well as its first phase response.

“The Government has sensibly recognised the case for removing needless red tape and striving to meet the original promise of the Act of a single point of assessment,” said UDIA National President Simon Basheer.

“Single touch assessments for housing projects represents a quantum leap forward and will instill greater confidence from proponents.

“As it currently exists, the EPBC Act leaves major projects faced with double or triple jeopardy via separate environmental assessments at federal, state and local government.

“The inconsistent and incoherent rules placed in front of proponents have stalled projects, cut housing supply and baked additional red tape costs into homes that squeeze through the system.

“There is an overwhelming case to ensure environmental assessments are conducted at the appropriate time in the development cycle to provide certainty.

“The review’s findings sit neatly alongside the Government’s deregulation and red tape agenda to help drive economic recovery, investment and major project delivery.

“The commitment to clearly defined national environmental standards will make it easier to achieve sound environmental outcomes whilst giving greater certainty to project proponents.

“Likewise, the plan to devolve greater responsibilities to the states and territories under an accreditation regime powered by bilateral agreements will simplify the process for everyone involved.”

Mr Basheer said UDIA National encourages the Government to focus on the transitional period to a new system and ensure existing projects in the system benefit from clear and strict deadlines.