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## EPBC final review welcomed by oil and gas sector

The release of the Graeme Samuel review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) assessing Australia's environmental regulatory framework has been welcomed by the oil and gas industry.

The review makes several recommendations to the Australian Government around the reform and modernisation of Australia's environmental legislative framework.

The focus on improving environmental, heritage and biodiversity conservation outcomes, while delivering greater regulatory efficiency to business and the community, is particularly supported by APPEA and its members.

APPEA Chief Executive Andrew McConville said the sector welcomed the EPBC Act review's final recommendations that focus on reducing the existing regulatory burden for approvals and recommends ways of streamlining environmental approval processes without lowering environmental protections.

"This once-in-a-decade legislative review provides an important opportunity to ensure Australia has a strong, clear and competitive development approvals process while protecting the environment," Mr McConville said.

"Industry supports reducing regulatory burdens and duplication while delivering equivalent or enhanced levels of environmental protection.

"A key component of the proposed reforms is to give greater responsibility to the states – which is where projects are being developed – on matters of environmental protection. At the same time, new robust standards set a consistent baseline for the states to follow.

"Establishing clear national environmental standards will mean the jurisdictions responsible for the day-to-day environmental, heritage and biodiversity management are accountable to uphold those standards, while also delivering a more streamlined approvals process as a result of lifting the overlapping levels of regulatory burden.

"This will deliver better environmental outcomes and improve certainty for business, environmental groups and communities. A good regulatory environment is an essential foundation for the environment and for a high performing and growing industry.

"It will also help ensure Australia remains an attractive destination for investment which is crucial for delivering energy security and sustainability for domestic and export customers."

Mr McConville said APPEA and its members were committed to sound resource and environmental management practices which are an integral part of industry operations.

"Modernising the regulatory process in Australia means industry will be able to maintain high environmental standards while improving certainty, consistency and transparency across agencies and jurisdictions."



Last year, APPEA made a [submission to the EPBC Act review](#) which highlighted four key areas:

- Avoiding duplication between jurisdictions and processes;
- Reducing delays in EPBC Act assessment and approval processes;
- Enhancing certainty for proponents, government and the community; and
- Focusing on outcomes and standards, rather than prescription.

**Media contact: Brad Watts – 0447 793 444 – [bwatts@appea.com.au](mailto:bwatts@appea.com.au)**