



MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations

*Chair: Alex Hawke MP
Deputy Chair: Tony Zappia MP*

Are eco-charity donations benefiting the environment?

Tax-deductible donations to hundreds of environmental groups will be scrutinised in a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Environment Committee.

The committee today launched an inquiry into the administration, transparency and effectiveness of the Register of Environmental Organisations (the Register) in supporting practical action to improve the environment.

Committee Chair, Alex Hawke MP, said the committee looks forward to hearing from a range of environmental organisations, including those currently listed on the Register, and other interested parties.

“Over 600 environmental groups are currently deductible gift recipients. This allows them to access tax-deductible donations to fund important, practical work to improve the natural environment. We need to ensure that tax deductible donations, which are a generous concession from the taxpayer, are used for the purpose intended and expected by the community,” he said.

The terms of reference empower the committee to 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 Committee will accept submissions addressing one or more of the terms of reference until **Thursday, 21 May 2015**.

Further details about how to make a submission can be obtained from the committee's website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/reo>.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Alex Hawke, on 0417 410 351 (personal mobile) and (02) 9899 7211 (Vincent So)

For further information: please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 4580, email environment.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/environment>