

13 December 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam,

The Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the EPBC Amendment (Emergency Listings) Bill 2011. FBA is the leading community-based organisation for sustainable natural resource management in Central Queensland. We are committed to long term sustainable use of our natural resources, and we value healthy ecosystems, a strong regional economy and a prosperous community. Membership of FBA comprises a broad cross section of the community, including representatives from sectors of Landcare, conservation, education, research, industry and agriculture as well as representatives from Indigenous groups and local and Queensland Government agencies.

FBA supports the EPBC Amendment (Emergency Listings) Bill 2011. There is a clear need for the emergency listings provisions for threatened species and communities, allowing such species to be listed at any stage prior to the final decision in the environmental impact assessment process. These legislative amendments will benefit such species as the Australian Snubfin Dolphin (*Orcaella heinsohni*); new research indicates that a genetically-isolated population of approximately 90 individuals occupy the area around the Fitzroy River mouth. This area is subject to two proposed coal export terminals that have the potential to significantly alter the local environment. Other nearby developments, including those on Curtis Island and the Port of Gladstone, also have the potential to negatively affect the regional environment and marine fauna.

The Australian Snubfin Dolphin is currently listed as a migratory species under the EPBC Act, however the research indicates that the species should be listed as vulnerable; more information is required to support this proposed listing, and until this becomes available, the precautionary principle should be applied until other information either confirms or negates the species conservation listing as vulnerable. Further information about the Snubfin is expected to be discovered during the environmental impact assessment process for the proposed coal export terminals; the emergency listings provisions will provide the opportunity to legislatively protect such species as new information comes to light about their ecology and conservation status.

FBA thanks you for the opportunity to provide comment on the EPBC Amendment (Emergency Listings)
Bill 2011.

Yours sincerely,

Suzie Christensen
Chief Executive Officer