



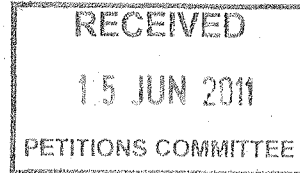
442-742

## The Hon Tony Burke MP

### Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

The Hon John Murphy MP  
Chair, Standing Committee on Petitions  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

C11/3473



- 8 JUN 2011

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 30 March 2011 regarding the Pumicestone Passage petition, presented by the Hon Peter Slipper MP to the Standing Committee on Petitions on 24 March 2011. The petition calls for a strategic environmental assessment of the Pumicestone Passage and its catchments located in South East Queensland. It also expresses concern regarding the impact of a proposed residential development at Caloundra South, adjoining Pumicestone Passage.

Part 10 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) provides for the strategic environmental impact assessment of proposed actions under a plan, policy or program, to be undertaken between a willing proponent and the Australian Government. In the context of the Pumicestone Passage and its catchments, a strategic environmental assessment may be difficult to achieve, given the multiplicity of current land uses in the area and the different management actions that may be required to address impacts.

However, the Government certainly supports the use of strategic assessments, where appropriate to cut red tape for business while better protecting the environment.

The recent federal budget provided a \$29.2 million investment in a new *Sustainable Regional Development* initiative to support better sustainability planning in regions that are experiencing high growth. The *Sustainable Regional Development* program will support strategic assessments under national environmental legislation in up to seven additional regional and coastal growth areas. The government has also implemented a number of programs and has provided significant funding to improve water quality in the Pumicestone Passage and Moreton Bay area. This includes the Moreton Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative and funding to support the development of the "South East Queensland Healthy Waterways Strategy 2007-2012".

The proposed residential development at Caloundra South has not yet been referred for assessment under the EPBC Act. Please be assured that any EPBC Act assessment process would ensure a full investigation of potential impacts of the proposal on matters of national environmental significance and include opportunities for public comment.

Thank you for writing to me on this matter and bringing the petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Tony Burke