



The Hon Tony Burke MP



728/1168-1170


Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

C12/26584

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



- 1 MAR 2013

Dear Mr Murphy 

I refer to your letter of 26 November 2012 concerning petitions on the application of the Christmas Island recovery plan under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Specifically, the petitioners request that I restrict the application of the Christmas Island recovery plan to specified tenures and exclude its operation from others.

The draft recovery plan has been developed with input from stakeholders and the wider community via community meetings and individual consultation. A recovery plan working group, convened by Parks Australia and chaired by the Administrator of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands, has been formed to involve stakeholders in the recovery planning process, particularly major land holders and land managers. Information about the opportunity to comment (in Malay, Chinese, and English) will be circulated on Christmas Island during the formal three month public consultation period. The consultation process will be facilitated on Christmas Island by Parks Australia, who will provide local contact officers to discuss the plan.

Recovery plans developed under the EPBC Act set out the research and management actions necessary to stop the decline, and promote the recovery, of threatened species or ecological communities. In response to the pervasive and increasing threats to the island's unique biodiversity, a systematic whole-of-ecosystem approach is needed to maintain the health of the entire island, beyond individual species. The draft Christmas Island recovery plan aims to provide a landscape approach to the conservation of the island's threatened species, consolidating and integrating the nine existing species recovery plans.

It is not intended that a recovery plan prescribe the outcome of decisions made under the EPBC Act in respect to assessment and approval of development activities. It is also not intended that a recovery plan prohibit classes or types of actions in specific places. Any action on Christmas Island, regardless of tenure, that is likely to or will have a significant impact on a listed threatened species must be referred under the EPBC Act for assessment and approval. This requirement exists whether or not a recovery plan is in place.

Yours sincerely

 Tony Burke