



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MEDIA RELEASE

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Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

NEW INQUIRY

**House Environment Committee to look
at ways of creating more environment jobs**

The House of Representatives Environment Committee is to conduct an inquiry into employment in the environment sector.

The inquiry will look at the current contribution of environmental goods and services to employment in Australia and the potential for future growth.

House Environment Committee Chair, Mr Bruce Billson MP, says the Committee is particularly interested in examining opportunities for growth.

"The provision of environmental goods and services currently makes a sizeable contribution to employment in Australia," Mr Billson said. "However we believe that contribution can grow significantly.

"This inquiry will look at how federal policy can assist that growth to be achieved."

Specifically, the inquiry will look at:

- The current contribution of environmental goods and services to employment in Australia;
- Potential opportunities for future growth in provision of environmental goods and services, including an examination of barriers to that potential growth, and their impact on employment;
- Whether we have, and how we can ensure, an appropriately skilled workforce;
- Appropriate policy measures that could encourage the further development of the environmental goods and services sector; and
- Possible information and reporting systems that would boost the uptake of environmental goods and services, enhance overall business performance, and assist development of the sector.

The inquiry was referred to the Committee by the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Hon Dr David Kemp.

Submissions are being sought by **Friday 30 August 2002**. After submissions have been considered, public hearings will be held to collect further evidence.

For **media comment**, please contact:

Bruce Billson, House Environment Committee Chair, on (03) 9781 2333.

For **background information**, please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or visit the Inquiry website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ>

Background: *The environmental goods and services industry is defined by the OECD to consist of activities which produce goods and services to measure, prevent, limit, minimise or correct environmental damage to water, air and soil, as well as problems related to waste, noise and eco-systems.*

Environmental goods and services can be therefore be broadly interpreted to include activities such as production of pollution reduction equipment, environmental consultants and employees in the public sector involved in national park management as well as related activities such as tourism and conservation and environmental management in agriculture, mining and manufacturing.

The role of indigenous land managers is likely to become increasingly important in environmental conservation and management. Also, utilisation of indigenous skills in land management and traditional knowledge in biodiversity, bioprospecting and biotechnology could become important sources of income and engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Similarly, in many landscapes farmers will increasingly be seen as providing environmental management services in the way in which they husband their land.

Telephone: 02 6277 4580

Facsimile: 02 6277 4424

E-mail: Environment.Reps@aph.gov.au

Website: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ/

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600