



Commonwealth Fact Sheet



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999

If your project has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on nationally protected matters, you will require approval in accordance with this Act.

1. What approvals do I need?

A person must not take an action that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on any matter of national environmental significance or other nationally protected matters without approval from the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment (the Minister). Matters of national environmental significance include:

- World and national heritage properties
- A water resource (in relation to coal seam gas and large coal mining developments)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Listed threatened species and ecological communities
- Wetlands of international importance (Ramsar wetlands).

A complete list of nationally protected matters is available on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the Department) [website](#).

2. Who provides approvals?

The Minister for the Environment or a delegate of the Minister is responsible for deciding whether to approve an action under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

3. How do I get Commonwealth approval?

If an action has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance it must be referred to the Department to determine whether further assessment is required. A decision on referral can take up to 20 business days.

This fact sheet provides general information and does not constitute legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice tailored to your individual circumstances. The Major Project Facilitation Agency (MPFA) assists Major Project Proponents to navigate the approvals process. The MPFA does not grant approvals, nor administer this Act or Regulations.

If a full assessment is required, the impacts of the project must be assessed in accordance with prescribed assessment process.

Further information on referring an action and the various assessment approaches are available [here](#).

Under assessment bilateral agreements with states and territories, a project may be assessed by the relevant State or Territory Government on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Assessment bilateral agreements have been in place with all States and Territories since 2015. The Commonwealth is currently establishing approval bilateral agreements to complement existing arrangements. Further information on streamlining environmental assessments and approvals is available [here](#). Assessment under the EPBC Act is subject to [cost recovery](#) arrangements.

4. More information

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For more information about EPBC Act approvals, visit the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [website](#) or call 02 6274 2496.

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

If you would like assistance to identify the regulatory obligations for your project, please visit our [Online Tool](#) or contact us:

Email: mpfa@industry.gov.au