



19 March 2019

The Hon Melissa Price
Minister for the Environment
Suite M1-19 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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Re: Toondah Harbour Development - EPBC Reference Number: 2018/8225

On behalf of the Australian Coastal Society (ACS), I would like to draw your urgent attention to the Toondah Harbour Redevelopment project, currently undergoing assessment as a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act).

The ACS, as a national organisation, is dedicated to promoting healthy coastal ecosystems, vibrant coastal communities and the sustainable use of coastal resources. It represents the combined knowledge and interests of a membership which includes leading scientists, the legal profession, elected representatives, coastal managers, the private sector and industry professionals, government, academia and members of the coastal community across Australia.

Toondah Harbour Redevelopment is a mixed-use development incorporating residential, retail, marina and port facilities, hotel, and tourism infrastructure. The development is located in the Moreton Bay Marine Park, which is also a designated Ramsar wetland area, home to a number of threatened species of birds, turtles and fish, including migratory species. The development requires the dredging of a large area of seabed and wetland and the clearing of onshore vegetation, including identified koala habitat.

Although the project is currently going through the approval process as a controlled action under the EPBC Act, there is no doubt that, on referral to the Minister, it should have been deemed to be 'clearly unacceptable' under Chapter 4 Part 7 Division 1A of the EPBC Act. In particular, a project action is 'clearly unacceptable' if it is clear that it would have unacceptable impacts on a matter protected by a provision of Part 3. The Toondah Harbour Development will have a significant impact on a number of Part 3 matters including:

- Wetlands of international importance (sections 16 & 17B);
- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 & 18A); and
- Listed migratory species (sections 20 & 20A).

ACS is of the view that this development proposal is unlikely to pass the tests outlined above. As an example, extensive dredging of the associated seabed and wetland areas will destroy habitat (rookeries and foraging areas) of migratory shorebird species and disrupt critically endangered species which include the Eastern Curlew. With respect to the declared Ramsar wetland, the initial project works and ongoing impacts once the development is completed, are also likely to be inconsistent with maintaining the ecological character of the wetland, and the conservation and sustainable use of the wetland.

Australia has long supported the Ramsar Convention, being the first country to lodge an instrument of accession and the first to designate a Ramsar wetland, leading the way for the rest of the world. The ACS is proud of this history and fully supportive of maintaining Australia's obligations under the Convention. The ACS would like to remind the Australian Government, when considering these further approvals, that it has an obligation to ensure that the proposal for the Toondah Harbour Redevelopment is consistent with both Australia's national environmental law and also its rights and obligations under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Yours sincerely



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