

# Media Release

24 August 2011

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## UDIA WELCOMES CHANGES TO FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) welcomes the reforms to the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act announced today by Tony Burke, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

UDIA is supportive of the greater use of strategic assessments and regional environment plans which will allow federal environment approvals to occur early in the development process.

“UDIA has long been calling for the capacity of strategic assessments to be enhanced so as to facilitate engagement with the commonwealth early in the development process.” said UDIA spokesperson Debra Goostrey.

“While the increased use of strategic assessments is welcome, the implementation of these will need to be done in close consultation with industry.”

Other key elements of the reforms include a more streamlined assessment process and new national standards for accrediting environmental assessment and approval processes.

“These changes have the potential to cut red tape, reduce duplication between the federal and state levels of Government and improve certainty for business” said Ms Goostrey.

The Minister also announced the release of a draft environmental offsets policy.

“While UDIA supports a national offsets policy in principle, any such document needs to provide clarity and certainty to industry without removing flexibility by including design limitations” said Ms Goostrey.

Although UDIA welcomes elements of Minister Burke’s reform agenda, concerns remain over certain aspects, such as the inclusion of ecosystems of national significance and moves towards cost recovery for referrals.

### Ends

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