



The Senate Must Cut Green Tape For Australia's Jobs

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Free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs has welcomed the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Streamlining Environmental Approvals) Bill 2020* (the Bill) which was read in the House of Representatives for the second time on 27 August 2020.

The Bill proposes to cut green tape in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) by devolving the process for environmental assessment and approvals to state governments.

“Devolving environmental approvals to the states has already been agreed to by National Cabinet, including Labor States. The Federal Labor party must now decide whether it stands with inner city elites and the cabal of environmental activists, or with job hungry mainstream Australians in the regions,” said Cian Hussey, Research Fellow at the IPA.

“Allowing state governments to conduct the environmental approvals required under the EPBC Act will significantly reduce duplication and is likely to cut approval times for major projects by an



average of six months.”

“Cutting green and red tape means more Australians will be able to experience the dignity of work, which is central to regions, communities, and the Australian way of life.”

“This will make investing in Australia more attractive, which is essential to creating jobs and getting Australians back into work in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“Commonwealth approvals often come with conditions that duplicate, or in some instances contradict, the conditions set by state agencies. This creates further delays, increasing costs and uncertainty and denying Australians the jobs they need and want.”

“By devolving environmental approvals to state governments, the Commonwealth will no longer be able to impose duplicative or contradictory conditions on development. State governments are best placed to make decisions about the projects in their state.”

IPA [research](#) submitted to the independent review of the EPBC Act found that regulations under the Act have increased by 445% since the year 2000. Additionally, the Act is far more complex than the average piece of Commonwealth legislation with readers more likely to encounter new words and phrases reading the Act than they are reading the original text of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*.

The IPA calls on the Morrison government to engage in further cuts to green tape in the EPBC Act.

Most importantly, Section 487, which allows environmental groups to engage in vexatious, ideologically driven legal challenges to stop development, must be repealed.

IPA [research](#) found that Section 487 has put over \$65 billion of investment at risk since the year 2000.