

23 October 2017

IPA REPORT: DECENTRALISING THE PROTECTION OF AUSTRALIAN THREATENED SPECIES

The responsibility for protecting threatened species should be returned to the States, according to a new report released today by free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

The report, *Decentralising the Protection of Australian Threatened Species*, authored by IPA Research Fellows Morgan Begg, Darcy Allen, and Daniel Wild, found that the size of the federal list of threatened species has increased by 63 per cent since 1992, and by 16 per cent under the current *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

The size and growth of the list has created regulatory duplication and uncertainty, and is contributing to the red tape problem holding back Australian prosperity.

"The current trajectory of threatened species listing is unsustainable, and places significant costs on development and growth," said IPA Research Fellow, Morgan Begg.

"As the IPA's long-running research programme on red tape has demonstrated, centralised environmental law, including the threatened species regime, facilitates 'green lawfare' – which has cost the Australian economy as much as \$1.2 billion in delays since 2000."

The analysis also found that nearly 90 per cent of species listed under federal law are also listed under state law.

"Duplicated species lists delay the development of Australian projects with no benefit to the environment. Meanwhile, the inconsistencies between the different lists creates uncertainty and further stymies development."

"The solution to this is environmental federalism. Only by embracing jurisdictional competition between the states will duplication be reduced and thus enabling more economic growth whilst maintaining environmental protection," said Mr Begg.

For media and comment: Evan Mulholland, Media and Communications Manager, on 0405 140 780, or at emulholland@ipa.org.au