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FEDERAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY WOULD BE ONE-EYED, ANTI-DEMOCRATIC

"The proposed federal Environment Protection Agency would empower unelected, activist bureaucrats to make decisions in relation to critical resources projects, and greatly diminish the role of elected governments," said Daniel Wild, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs.

This week, the federal environment minister Tanya Plibersek confirmed that the government would proceed with its job destroying Environment Protection Agency (EPA) proposal.

The proposed federal EPA would have power over not just enforcement and compliance matters relating to environment regulations, but also would have explicit power over project approval decisions.

"The Samuel Review into the nation's federal environmental laws categorically and specifically rejected calls for the kind of independent EPA the federal government is now trying to introduce," said Mr Wild.

The Samuel Review states it *"is entirely appropriate that elected representatives (and their delegates) make decisions that require competing values to be weighed and competing national objectives to be balanced."*

"Despite what the Samuel Review said, we now know that, behind closed doors, the role of the proposed EPA has been dramatically expanded to include independent assessment and approval authority, with limited ministerial oversight," said Mr Wild.

"It is clear the Prime Minister has misled the Australian people. Prior to the election, the PM committed that any federal EPA would be limited to compliance assurance and enforcement, and environmental data, information and analysis."

"Instead, the proposed federal EPA would be turned into a one-eyed activist beast, focussed only on the views of activists, without consideration for the potential economic and social benefits of major resources projects,"

Recent IPA research has established that the total number of federal bureaucrats dedicated to policing red tape will reach 100,000 this year.

The growth in bureaucrats has been concentrated in the Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water portfolio; where total staff will increase by 51 per cent – which, in percentage terms, is three times more growth than any other portfolio in the same period.

"It is concerning at a time when Australia desperately needs productivity growth that the federal government has outsourced vital policy to inner-city elites and the political class," said Mr Wild.

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