

The proposal to streamline approvals for large-scale renewable energy developments under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is unacceptable and fundamentally undermines the Act's very purpose. Weakening oversight in the name of an "urgent energy transition" elevates ideology over evidence and places Australia's most vulnerable species and communities at risk of permanent harm.

The EPBC Act exists to apply the precautionary principle and safeguard biodiversity, not to serve as a rubber stamp for politically fashionable industries. Science itself is dynamic, contested and constantly evolving. The claim of catastrophic, human-driven climate change—used to justify fast-tracking these projects—is far from settled and is increasingly questioned in the public domain. To dilute environmental scrutiny on the back of an untested narrative or funding-driven agendas is reckless and inconsistent with the Act's intent.

Every industrial-scale renewable energy project must undergo a full, independent, and transparent environmental and social impact assessment under the EPBC Act. Anything less amounts to a dereliction of duty and a betrayal of the communities and ecosystems the Act was designed to protect.

Approving such projects without rigorous checks ignores both the evolving nature of scientific knowledge and the possibility that today's prevailing assumptions may prove flawed tomorrow. If that occurs, those who weakened the Act will bear responsibility for the resulting loss of biodiversity and community wellbeing.

It is especially galling that a Labor Government—historically founded on principles of fairness, protection of the vulnerable, community welfare, stewardship of the land, and long-term planning—would seek to gut the nation's flagship environmental protection law for short-term political expediency. Such a move is a betrayal of the party's own National Platform which commits Labor to strong environmental standards, accountable governance, and protection of nature for future generations. Those proposing and driving these changes should be held publicly accountable and formally censured for attempting to erode environmental safeguards in defiance of both the letter and the spirit of the EPBC Act.

If we allow these provisions to be weakened now, there may be nothing left worth protecting in the future. Once species are lost, habitats destroyed, or ecosystems irreversibly damaged, no political rhetoric or policy reform will restore what has gone.

I therefore call for the Australian Government to uphold the EPBC Act in its entirety, refuse any weakening of its provisions for renewable energy projects, and ensure that decisions are guided by impartial, evidence-based science rather than political or ideological expediency.