18 February 2013

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: ec.sen.aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012

Pacific Hydro would like to echo the sentiment expressed in the submission from Sustainable Business Australia in relation to the above-named amendment bill.

We agree with SBA that national environmental issues need strong national leadership and direction. The primary, and crucial, role of the EPBC Act is to protect nationally and internationally important environment, biodiversity and heritage.

In Pacific Hydro's experience, the current EPBC referral process works well, concentrating on EPBC species/habitats on the basis of scientific merit. Were the process to change, Pacific Hydro is concerned that the intention of the amendment – to 'streamline the process' – would not be delivered, and may in fact lead to further 'green tape', increased bureaucracy in each state and a devolution of the consistent approach taken at the Federal level.

About Pacific Hydro

Pacific Hydro is a leading Australian renewable energy company with over 20 years' experience in project finance, development, construction and operation of hydro, wind, solar and geothermal power projects in Australia, Brazil and Chile. Building on these existing interests, this year we launched a retail electricity business for the Australian commercial and industrial retail market.

We are a wholly owned subsidiary of Industry Funds Management's Australian Infrastructure Fund through which Pacific Hydro provides sustainable infrastructure investment opportunities for around 5 million Australian superannuants. We are proud to continue to provide strong returns for the environment, local communities and investors.

Pacific Hydro has several small hydro plants, the Ord Hydro power station in WA and developed, owns and operates six wind farms in Australia that meet the annual power needs of 136,000 homes and avoid the emission of up to 670,000 tCO_{2-e} each year.

Pacific Hydro has significant projects in our development pipeline across Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia for wind, large scale solar PV and conventional geothermal. As such we have a strong interest in environmental approvals powers and their status in terms of planning and regulatory functions.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Richards
Executive Manager Government & Corporate Affairs
Pacific Hydro Australia