Subject: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment
Date: Thursday, 17 January 2013 5:43:09 PM

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write on behalf of the Friends of Shorebirds SE regarding the Committee's investigation in to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012 (the Bill).

I support the Bill as I feel particularly strongly about the role of the Federal government in environmental regulation. If the Federal government hands over its approval powers under the EPBC Act to the States, as it is currently able to do, it could spell potential disaster for our environment and much that has been gained in recent years could be lost.

Environmental issues of a national scale need national leadership. This is well illustrated in the case of shorebirds which do not recognise even national borders, let alone State borders. Adverse decisions taken in one State could easily lead to adverse impacts in another State, as shorebirds regularly cross these boundaries.

Our shorebirds are protected by a number of international treaties and agreements and only the Federal government can ensure compliance with the obligations arising from these treaties and agreements.

For the above, and many other reasons, I believe that it would never be appropriate for the Federal government to hand over their federal approval powers to the States. For this reason, the power to do so should be removed from the EPBC Act. The recent law reform proposal processed through COAG to "cut green tape" has highlighted the problem of this section of the Act.

I support the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012. The Bill will give certainty to the involvement of the Federal government in protecting Australia's special places and fauna in to the future.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Campbell
President
Friends of Shorebirds SE