



Does the EPA need to assess my proposal?

If a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, it may be referred to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for a decision on whether or not it requires assessment under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

Under this Act a 'proposal' refers to a project, plan, program, policy, operation, undertaking or development, or change in land use, or amendment of any of these, but does not include a scheme. For more information, refer to the EPA Environmental Assessment Guidelines - Defining a Proposal.

What does significant mean?

A decision by the EPA on whether a proposal is likely to cause a significant impact on the environment is made using professional judgement gained through knowledge and experience in the application of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and considering:

- the environmental values of the area affected;
- the extent and consequence of the likely impact (or change) on the environment;
- the resilience of the environment to cope with the impact;
- the extent and rigour with which the potential impact has been investigated and described in the proponent's information, and the confidence in the reliability of the predicted impact;
- principles of environmental protection, policies, guidelines, procedures and standards against which a proposal can be assessed;
- the degree of public interest; and
- the extent to which other statutory decision-making approval processes meet the EPA's expectations for EIA, including EPA objectives and outcomes.

A full list of the matters the EPA considers when determining whether a proposal is significant can be found in the *Environmental Impact Assessment Administrative Procedures 2010*.

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Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

Proponents should also determine their obligations under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The EPBC Act aims to protect matters of national environmental significance and any action likely to have a substantial impact on these matters is to be referred to the Commonwealth's Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

Matters of national environmental significance include World Heritage properties, Ramsar wetlands, nationally threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species, Commonwealth marine areas, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and nuclear actions.

For more information, refer to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities website at <http://www.environment.gov.au/>.

For more information, contact:

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