

MEDIA STATEMENT

15 December 2022

CRA applauds major reforms to Australia's environment laws

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) welcomes the announcement by Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek of the formation of a new Environment Protection Agency and the reform of current environment laws.

CRA made a [submission](#) to the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment and Communications inquiry in March 2021 calling on the previous government to introduce “stronger National Environmental Standards” and to “take more seriously the recommendations of Prof. Samuel’s Final Report” in developing these standards.

CRA applauds the Federal Government’s announcement to develop legally binding national standards for all environmental decisions that will be enforceable by a newly established federal Environment Protection Agency.

“The introduction of legally binding national standards is a step in the right direction towards addressing a great crisis of our time, the destruction of our lands and waters. Time is limited, so we must act now,” said Peter Jones OSA, President of CRA.

CRA also welcomes the introduction of a national standard on First Nations engagement to ensure Indigenous people are properly consulted and involved in decisions affecting their country and customs.

“We support a standard that will enable the views and knowledge of First Nations people to be taken into account in all project approvals and planning decisions, and the co-design of that standard by the Indigenous Advisory Committee,” said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

While the Government’s announcement is an important first step, CRA expresses reservations around the exclusion of a climate trigger in the national standards and the establishment of an offset fund.

CRA looks forward to contributing to the Government’s exposure draft legislation when it is released in 2023 and commenting on the environmental protection framework.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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