

**More Information**

There are plenty of sites on the internet to provide more information on this rapidly growing area. Some of the key ones are:

International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment – <http://www.iisbe.org/>

Australian Green Building Council – <http://www.gbcaus.org/>

UN Green Building Council – <http://www.usgbc.org/>

The 60L Green Building – <http://www.60lgreenbuilding.com/>

**NATIONAL & COMMONWEALTH***Editor: Elizabeth Marsden***EPBC updates**

The Great Australian Bight Marine Park (Commonwealth Waters) draft Management Plan 2005-2012 (second version) has been released for public comment. The Great Australian Bight Marine Park consists of two adjoining protected areas, one area being the coastal waters up to 3 nautical miles and managed by the South Australian Government, and the other area extending from the edge of the coastal waters to the 200 nautical mile (Exclusive Economic Zone) mark and managed by the Federal Government. The management plans for the Marine Park regulate recreational, scientific and commercial uses by reference to four distinct zones: the Sanctuary Zone and Conservation Zone (both in State waters) and the Marine Mammal Protection Zone and Benthic Protection Zone (both in Commonwealth waters). The draft Management Plan for 2005-2012 relates only to the Commonwealth zones. Comments were to be received by the Department of Environment and Heritage by 6 December 2004, but for general information a copy of the draft Plan may be viewed at: <http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/mpa/gab/draft-plan.html>

The Identification and Assessment of Nationally Threatened Woodlands Report was released in October 2004, titled "Description of Ecological Communities: Arid Eucalypt Woodlands". The Report identifies 23 major non-mallee eucalypt woodlands in arid and semi-arid areas throughout Australia as proposed 'National Ecological Communities' (NECs). The document presents a summary of the data collected on these areas and assesses the conservation status of each. Out of the 23 identified areas, 13 are provisionally assessed as not threatened, although there are several areas which require more data for comprehensive assessment. The threatened eucalypt woodland areas are riparian ecosystems and generally occur in two bioregions in Australia. The authors of the Report suggest that many of the areas may be more accurately described as 'National Ecological Alliances' rather than NECs. A copy of the report is available on the EPBC Act website of the Department of Environment and Heritage: <http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/news/index.html>

On 14 October 2004, the Federal Court ordered a NSW farmer and his company to pay a record \$450,000 penalty for the illegal clearing, ploughing and wheat-cropping of the Gwydir Ramsar Wetlands near Moree, New South Wales in July and August 2003. The wetland is identified as one of Australia's 64 Wetlands of International Importance and listed under the Ramsar Convention accordingly. The farmer's actions were held to be deliberate, unauthorised and likely to have significant impact on the ecological character of the Ramsar site in contravention of the EPBC Act. The penalty imposed by the Federal Court has been described by the Federal Government as the heaviest for environmental damage caused by an Australian landholder and the first civil prosecution in relation to a matter of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act. The farmer was fined \$150,000 and his company fined \$300,000, with costs awarded to the Federal Government. In addition, the farmer was prevented by an injunction from undertaking any further agricultural activities on the land and was ordered to rehabilitate the affected site. More details are available at: <http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/compliance/judgements/index.html>

**Water efficiency labelling**

The Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Bill was introduced to the Senate on 12 August 2004. The purpose of the bill is to create a national scheme of water efficiency labelling and minimum standards for particular products, such as washing machines, dishwashers, toilets, shower heads and taps. The bill is yet to be passed.

## Climate change

On 16 August 2004, Australia and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding on climate change issues. This followed a Joint Declaration made by the two countries in September 2003. The bilateral program will aim to create a framework for the implementation of projects focusing on major climate change issues, to support domestic policies and multilateral efforts. The Memorandum of Understanding will be administered by the Australian Greenhouse Office and may be viewed on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, at [http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/china/mou\\_climate\\_china.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/china/mou_climate_china.html).

## World Heritage

Funding of \$16.4 million has been allocated by the Federal Government to the conservation of Australia's World Heritage areas, as part of the overall Natural Heritage Trust scheme. The funding is to cover the period 2004-2006 and is also intended to assist with preparing nominations for new areas to be added to the World Heritage List.

## Waterwatch conference

The fourth National Waterwatch Conference will take place from 7-10 February 2005 at the University of Melbourne. Titled 'Navigating the Rapids', the conference will involve coordinators from Waterwatch and other national environmental programs, environmental organisations, scientists, officers from the local, state and federal governments, and others. The conference will focus on promoting community water monitoring on a nationwide basis.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

*Editor: Dr Nicholas Brunton*

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### Redfern-Waterloo Authority Act 2004

The Redfern-Waterloo Authority Act 2004 (the "Act") came into force on 17 January 2005, establishing the Redfern-Waterloo Authority (the "Authority"). The Authority is the vehicle chosen by the Government to bring about substantial redevelopment of the Redfern-Waterloo area south of the CBD. It is a different model to the "development corporation" that has been favoured in the past with significant wider powers and responsibilities. For example, the new Authority has powers to resume land, to development detailed planning controls, to deal with public and private land, to create subsidiary corporations and to invest in corporations, and importantly to approve development which is declared to be "State Significant Development".

The Authority is subject to the control and direction of one Minister, Mr Frank Sartor, who is not the Minister for Planning. Significantly, while its operational area has been defined (ie: east of City Road, west of South Dowling Street, south of Cleveland Street and north of Lachlan Street) the powers of the Authority extend beyond this, with the ability to exercise its functions on any private or public land.

In a second reading speech on 19 November 2004, Mr Sartor said that he expected most government land at Redfern-Waterloo to be declared "State Significant", including the Australian Technology Park, the Eveliegh Railway Workshop and the department of Housing Assets, the Block and the surrounding areas as well as the Carlton and United Breweries site. But it will not be limited to government land; the planning Minister may declare any proposed development inside or outside the operational area to be "State Significant".

The Authority is required to prepare a Redfern-Waterloo Plan dealing with urban form, planning controls, infrastructure, public housing and other matters. The Authority may then request the planning Minister to make environmental planning instruments (EPIs) to give effect to the Plan. The planning Minister may follow the procedure for making the relevant EPIs in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), but more than likely the planning Minister will use his new power under this Act to simply gazette the new EPIs without any public participation in the making of the instruments.