



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

File N°:

Contact Officer: Nick Wheen

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I refer to your email of 23 February 2011 regarding the construction of a helipad and gauging station by Hydro Tasmania at Fincham's Crossing on the Franklin River, Tasmania.

As you are aware, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) protects matters of national environmental significance. Matters of national environmental significance include World Heritage Properties and National Heritage places, nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities, among others.

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has looked into this matter. Hydro Tasmania has advised that the helipad was originally installed in 1988. This helipad is used to access the gauging facility. The helipad was originally constructed from treated pine and in October 2009 the helipad was upgraded to address safety concerns. At the time of upgrading the helipad, vegetation was cleared around the helipad as has been the practice since its installation in 1988.

Following a complaint in relation to this clearing, it became evident that Hydro Tasmania had incorrectly communicated the amount of vegetation to be cleared. In April 2010, in accordance with an agreement with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, felled vegetation was cleared and jute matting placed over the exposed earth to manage potential erosion. Hydro Tasmania have committed to continue investigating options for amending vegetation management practices, including promoting growth of lower growing shrub species and thinning tree species in defined areas.



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The department is satisfied with the response provided by Hydro Tasmania. Based on the information provided the upgrading of the helipad and vegetation clearing appears to be a lawful continuation of land use under section 43B of the EPBC Act, and as such, no approvals were required under the EPBC Act.

Should you have any queries about the matters raised in this letter please call the contact officer, Nick Wheen on 02 6275 9038.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Yours sincerely



Shane Gaddes
Director
Compliance Section

10 May 2011