

Draft Cockatoo Guidelines released for public comment

As you will be aware, it has been Lavan's view for some time that the policy position in relation to the threshold for significance of Black Cockatoo habitat in the Swan Coastal Plain is wholly inadequate and fails to provide stakeholders with any certainty in relation of the referral requirements under the EPBC Act.

The Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has however just released draft referral guidelines for three species of Western Australian black cockatoos - Carnaby's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*), Baudin's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus baudinii*) and the forest red-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*). The draft referral guidelines can be found on the Department's website at <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/wa-black-cockatoos.html>.

By way of summary, the draft referral guidelines incorporate the thresholds that the Department has been applying to proponents for some time now, for example, the thresholds for 'significant impact' or 'likely significant impact' triggering referral under the EPBC Act are stated in the draft referral guidelines at Table 3 as follows:

- Clearing of any known nesting tree.
- Clearing of any part or degradation of breeding habitat.
- Clearing of more than 1 ha of quality foraging habitat.
- Creating a gap of greater than 4 km between patches of black cockatoo habitat (breeding, foraging or roosting).
- Clearing or degradation (including pruning the top canopy) of a known roosting site.

We appreciate that many may still dispute the scientific rationale for the thresholds and note that the release of the draft referral guidelines present a valuable opportunity to comment on the content thereof. Importantly, the public comments for the guidelines expires on 19 August 2011.

In light of the substantial implications that this policy has on the development industry in Western Australia, it is our strong recommendation that developers and consultants pay urgent attention to the draft guidelines and take the time to provide their comments to them. Comments can be sent to speciespolicy@environment.gov.au.

In light of our discussion with many of you in relation to the significant impact guidelines for the Black Cockatoo species, we would welcome discussion with you in relation to the preparation of those submissions and/or to prepare draft submissions to the Department on your behalf.

For more information please contact:

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Environmental Focus Group

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