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## Register of Environmental Organisations report highlights sensible reforms

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the House of Representatives Environment Committee report into the Register of Environmental Organisations and calls on the Government to implement the balanced findings to prevent the occurrence of unlawful or unsafe environmental activities.

The Register enables eligible environmental organisations to receive tax-deductible donations. The report rightly focuses on the administration of the Register and on the effectiveness of the Register in supporting communities to undertake legal action to help improve the environment.

Key recommended reforms include:

- the administration process for tax deductibility for environmental organisations be transferred wholly to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO);
- environmental organisations as a prerequisite need to be registered as an environmental charity through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission;
- the ATO maintain a publicly available list of registered organisations;
- administrative sanctions be introduced for environmental deductible gift recipients that encourage, support, promote, or endorse illegal or unlawful activity; and
- the ATO investigate options for establishing publicly available annual reporting requirements for organisations to maintain deductible gift recipient status.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Mr Ross Hampton said, “Registered environmental organisations, just like many other not-for-profit organisations, are entitled to receive tax deductible gifts and contributions to carry out useful conservation work. However the report details instances that a minority of groups are misusing these tax-deductible donations to undertake activities that are unlawful or unsafe.”

“AFPA calls on the Government to implement the effective reforms that will ensure transparency and accountability of the legal activities of registered environmental organisations,” said Mr Hampton.

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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