

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Instrument under section 184(1)(a)

(Issued under the Authority of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities)

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the Act) places certain obligations on the Commonwealth to protect and conserve threatened ecological communities.

The purpose of this instrument is to amend the list of threatened ecological communities under section 181 of the Act in accordance with paragraph 184(1)(a) of the Act by including in the list in the endangered category:

- Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions

as recommended by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (the Committee), having regard to the definition of endangered ecological communities under subsection 182(2) of the Act.

The Committee concluded that the Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions ecological community met the criteria specified in Division 7.1 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*, as follows:

- Criterion 2 as endangered because it has a restricted distribution and the nature of its distribution makes it likely that the action of a threatening process could cause it to be lost in the near future;
- Criterion 4 as endangered because the reduction in integrity across most its range is severe as indicated by severe degradation of the community; and
- Criterion 5 as vulnerable because its rate of continuing detrimental change is substantial as indicated by a rate of continuing decline in its geographic distribution that is serious.

On the basis of the assessment and advice of the Committee, I am satisfied that this ecological community is eligible to be included in the endangered category. In deciding to include it in the list, I only considered matters that relate to whether the ecological community is eligible to be included in that category, and the effect that including the ecological community in that category could have on the survival of the ecological community.

Consultation on the nomination to amend the list of threatened ecological communities under the Act to include this ecological community was undertaken before the legislative instrument was made in accordance with the process outlined in Part 13, Division 1, Subdivision AA of the Act. The nomination was placed on public exhibition, and public comments were sought as required by the Act. Parties with relevant expertise were directly consulted regarding their views. All public submissions received were forwarded to the Committee and to me for consideration.

This instrument is a legislative instrument for the purposes of the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*.

The instrument commenced on the day after it was registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.