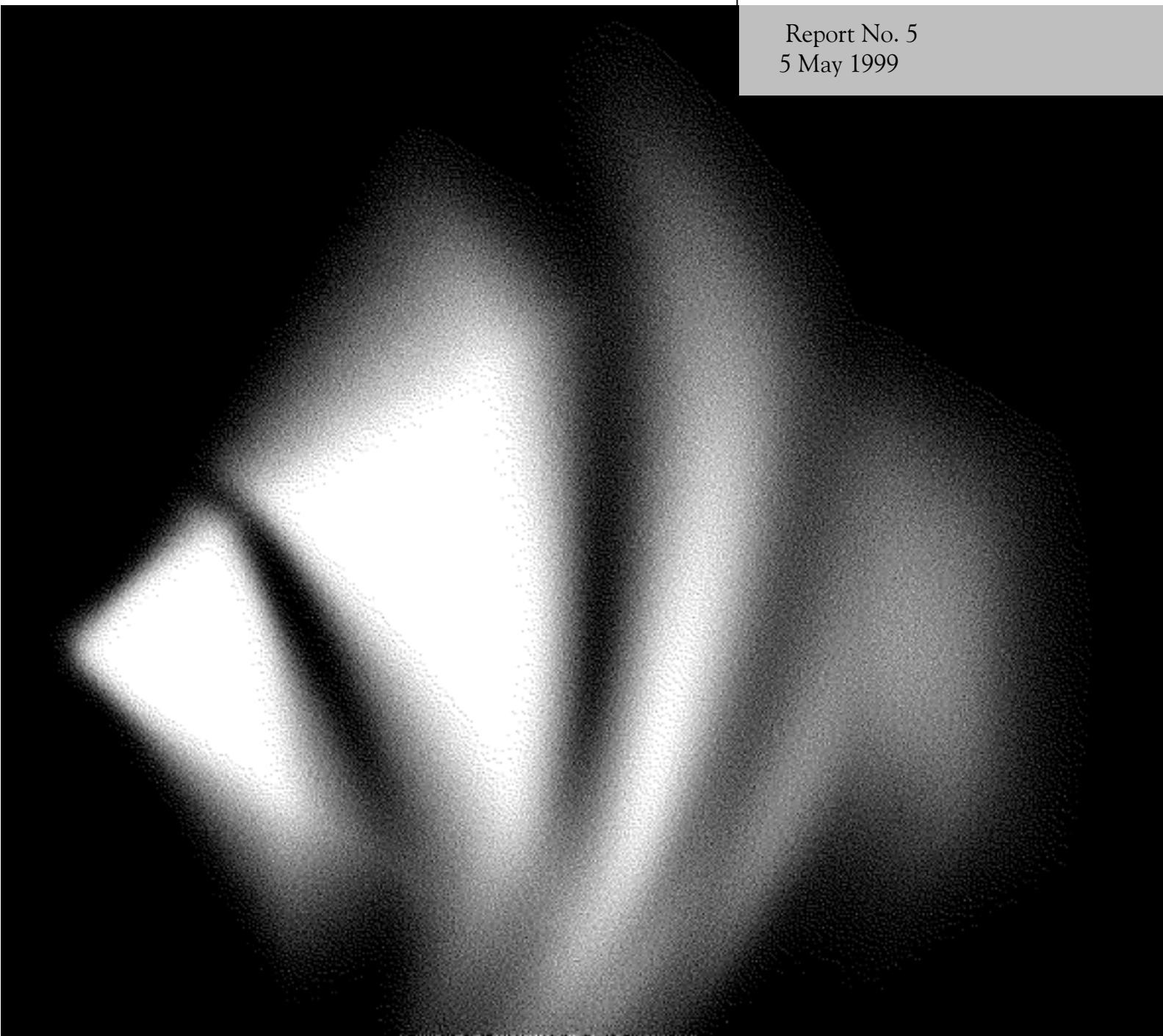




Implementation of Ecologically Sustainable Development by Commonwealth Departments and Agencies

Inquiry Report

Report No. 5
5 May 1999



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Information about the Productivity Commission and its current work program can be found on the website: www.pc.gov.au

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25 May 1999

The Honourable Peter Costello MP
Treasurer
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer

In accordance with Section 11 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998*, I have pleasure in submitting to you the Commission's final report on Implementation of Ecologically Sustainable Development by Commonwealth Departments and Agencies.

Yours sincerely

Dr Neil Byron
Presiding Commissioner

Terms of reference

I, PETER COSTELLO, Treasurer, under Parts 2 and 3 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998*, hereby refer the implementation of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) by Commonwealth departments and agencies to the Commission for inquiry and report within nine months of receipt of this reference.

Background

The Government is keen to ensure Commonwealth departments and agencies show leadership in the processes by which economic, social and environmental goals are integrated. This inquiry will assess ESD implementation by Commonwealth departments and agencies with major responsibility for ESD, or whose activities have significant consequences for its achievement, and make recommendations designed to further implement the objectives and principles of the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development.

Scope of the reference

In undertaking this inquiry, the Commission is to:

- a) evaluate how those Commonwealth Government departments and agencies with significant policy or program management responsibilities related to ESD, or which undertake activities which directly impact on the achievement of ESD, have incorporated ESD into their policy formulation, decision-making processes and programs;
- b) review existing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate ESD outcomes, and report on the effectiveness of Commonwealth policies and programs in changing community or corporate behaviours in ways which promote ESD outcomes;
- c) analyse the policy and economic implications of these Commonwealth departments and agencies incorporating environmental considerations into their economic and social decision-making processes, and provide case studies in priority areas;
- d) develop conceptual frameworks and evaluation mechanisms for incorporating ESD into government decision-making processes;
- e) develop priorities among Commonwealth Government departments and agencies and their programs and activities for the further implementation of ESD; and
- f) recommend improved frameworks and processes for reporting, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of ESD.

PETER COSTELLO

25 August 1998

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Abbreviations and explanations

Abbreviations

ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACA	Australian Communications Authority
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
AFFA	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry — Australia
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AGO	Australian Greenhouse Office
AGSO	Australian Geological Survey Organisation
AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANCA	Australian Nature Conservation Agency
ANZECC	Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council
ANZMEC	Australian and New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council
ARMCANZ	Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AUSLIG	Australian Surveying and Land Information Group
BRS	Bureau of Rural Sciences
BSP	Basin Sustainability Program
CAC	community advisory council
CAR	comprehensive, adequate and representative
CC	consultative committee
CMC	catchment management committee

CoA	Commonwealth of Australia
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRA	comprehensive regional assessments
CSDC	Commonwealth Spatial Data Committee
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DEH	Department of the Environment and Heritage
DEMC	Defence Environmental Management Committee
DEPS	Defence Environment Policy Statement
DoD	Department of Defence
DoTRS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
EA	Environment Australia
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EMP	Environment Management Plan
EMS	Environmental Management System
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill
EP(IP) Act	<i>Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974</i>
ESD	ecologically sustainable development
ETS	emissions trading system
FAG	fisheries assessment group
FRDC	Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
ICM	integrated catchment management
IGAE	Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment
IGT	Inter-governmental Team
ISO	International Standards Organisation
ITQ	individual transferable quota
JANIS	Joint ANZECC/MCFFA National Forest Policy Statement Implementation Sub-committee
LWRRDC	Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation

MAC	management advisory committee
MCFFA	Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture
MDBC	Murray-Darling Basin Commission
MDBMC	Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council
MIG	Montreal Process Implementation Group
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NEPC	National Environment Protection Council
NEPM	National Environment Protection Measure
NFPS	National Forest Policy Statement
NGRS	National Greenhouse Response Strategy
NGS	National Greenhouse Strategy
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NIA	national impact analysis
NOI	notice of intention
NRMS	Natural Resource Management Strategy
NSESD	National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development
OBM	output based management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PM&C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
PMSEIC	Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council
R&D	research and development
resp.	response to the Commission's questionnaire
RFA	regional forest agreement
RIS	regulation impact statement
SCNPMGTE	Steering Committee on National Performance Monitoring of Government Trading Enterprises
SCRCSSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
SI&E	Strategic Investigation and Education

TAC	total allowable catch
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Explanations

Billion	The convention used for a billion is a thousand million (10 ⁹).
Findings	<i>Findings in the body of the report are paragraphs highlighted using italics, as this is.</i>
Recommendations	<i>Recommendations in the body of the report are highlighted using bold italics with an outside border, as this is.</i>

Department names

During the course of the inquiry, the names and responsibilities of some Commonwealth departments and agencies changed after the 1998 federal elections. Listed below are changes to the names of departments and agencies referred to in this report:

Current name:	Former name:
Bureau of Rural Sciences	Bureau of Resource Sciences
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry — Australia	Department of Primary Industries and Energy
Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts	Department of Communications and the Arts
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	Department of Industry, Science and Tourism
Department of Transport and Regional Services	Department of Transport and Regional Development