

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

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

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Instrument under section 194D

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the Act) places certain obligations on the Commonwealth to protect and conserve threatened species. Among these is the obligation to establish and amend lists of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and key threatening processes.

Section 194D of the Act provides that the Minister may determine one or more conservation themes that the Minister considers should be given priority in relation to an assessment period. In making this determination, the Minister may request and have regard to advice from the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (the Committee) under subsection 194D(3) of the Act. The Committee is established under section 502 of the Act.

This instrument determines ‘*Corridors and connecting habitats (including freshwater habitats)*’ as the conservation theme to be given priority for the assessment period commencing 1 October 2012. This theme was recommended to the Minister by the Committee.

The Committee considered the prioritisation of this theme was warranted. The Committee considered that many of Australia’s ecological communities have been extensively degraded and fragmented, resulting in reduced connectivity with and between landscapes. In addition, ecological resilience to rapid climate change is likely to decline as connectivity is compromised.

The instrument commences on the day after it is registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. As provided in section 194D of the Act, section 42 of the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003* does not apply to this Instrument (disallowance).