

SUBMISSION TO THE EPBC ACT REVIEW

ANON-K57V-XQTU-Y

Name

Ying Zhi Gu

State or Territory

Victoria

Areas of Interest

The objects of the Act; Threatened species; International obligations; Indigenous Australians; Environmental Impact Assessments; Great Barrier Reef; Climate change; Compliance and enforcement; Public participation in decision making; Biodiversity; Conservation; Water;

Attachment provided

Yes

Do you give permission for your submission to be published?

Yes - with my name and/or organisation (if included)

SUBMISSION RESPONSES

This submission was provided as an attachment only. The attachment is provided on the following pages of this document.

Dear EPBC Act Review Secretariat,

As an obstetrician and a mother of two, I'm deeply concerned by the ongoing degradation of the environment and its consequence on human health. This summer like many other families, we planned to visit the NSW coast but instead the thick smoke triggered acute wheezing from my niece and sent us back the way we came. The recent megafires have highlighted Australia's vulnerability to climate change and how our health are fundamentally dependent on our environment.

Since the inception of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act:

- Australia's mammal extinction rate is the world's highest with more than 10% of species wiped out since European colonisation; this is significant given Australia has more non-fish vertebrate animals than 95% of the world's countries
- Illegal logging of old growth forests continues, by government backed enterprises like VicForests. So much so, that Australia is the only developed country identified as a global deforestation hotspot.
- The Great Barrier Reef has experienced four mass bleaching events all caused by rising ocean temperatures driven by climate change. Yet, the Act plays no role in limiting climate change despite the central nature of this environmental threat.

Review of the EPBC Act is over-due and I ask that meaningful reform occurs to ensure the legislation achieves the objectives of its name. To face the challenges that lie ahead and safeguard our future, priorities of the Act must include

1. Carbon emissions reduction targets in legislation
2. Identify and protect critical habitats for threatened species
3. Implement controls on deforestation and provide incentives for land managers to protect and restore national ecosystems on their properties
4. Provide national protections for water resources, national parks and reserves
5. Ensure binding national standards for air pollution and plastic pollution

The Commonwealth government needs to provide stronger leadership to the States and Territories, guided by scientific evidence from an Australian panel of environmental experts. The reformed Act needs to set evidence-based national and regional environmental standards and goals, and have performance assessed

and enforced by an independent body free from political interference

We all depend on a healthy environment for our life support systems – clean air, water, healthy soils and a stable climate. Let's not waste this opportunity to improve the EPBC Act together for our health and unique flora and fauna.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this submission and outcomes of the review.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ying Zhi Gu

Victoria