

SUBMISSION TO THE EPBC ACT REVIEW

ANON-K57V-XY7H-W

Name

Alisha Mercer

State or Territory

Victoria

Areas of Interest

Threatened species; Matters of National Environmental Significance; Environmental Impact Assessments; Climate change; Compliance and enforcement; Decision making; Public participation in decision making; Biodiversity; Conservation;

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 Professor Samuel and Independent Review Panel,

I would like to make a submission into the 2019-2020 Independent Review of the EPBC Act. This submission will cover the following:

- ✓ The EPBC Act and its major issues I see with how it protects our native wildlife, especially considering the increasing threat posed by climate change
- ✓ The Government's failure to ensure that the funding and actions need to protect our wildlife are in place
- ✓ How as a nation we must respond to the catastrophic affect of the 2019-2020 summer bushfires
- ✓ Where I think the EPBC Act and related Government policy needs to be reformed

I was raised in Cobram on the Murray River and have seen over years of observing Koala populations in the North Central Victoria area as well as Southern Riverina NSW the high portion of the local Koala population dying from sarcoptic mange (scabies). James Leonard, from Dutch Thunder Wildlife Care and Rescue said, 'We've had over 100 koalas infected in the last 12 months — that's an average of one every four days,' Mr Leonard said. "With the number of cases increasing each year, there are concerns that we may lose the local koala population. With so many local koalas affected by scabies and decline of koala populations throughout Australia caused by the recent 2019-2020 summer bushfires and widespread logging and deforestation and the looming threat of climate change we need a strong workable EPCB Act that is going to protect Australia's native species.

I personally care about the protections of our native Australian wildlife and our out of control extinction crisis. I want to ensure the EPBC Act is up to date to deal with the Australian extinction crisis and has the power to protect Australia's native wildlife.

Widespread logging and deforestation have seen our native species populations wiped out in areas all over the country. National Data showing a decline in Koalas all around NSW, QLD, and the ACT (WWF- Australia Report (2017) *current status of Koala in QLD and NSW*). The 2016 state of the Environment Report found that this decline is happening across the board to nearly all our threatened native species.

The recent Senate inquiry into Australia's faunal extinction crisis found that was because the EPBC Act "is incapable of addressing" our current extinction threat. I am extremely disappointed that the situation is not being dealt with and I expect the Australian Government to:

1. Ensure Australia does not return to business as usual after the catastrophic 2019-2020 summer bushfires. The same laws and policies that have failed Australia's wildlife over decades and done truly little to mitigate the climate crisis cannot be relied on to help us recover after the 2019-2020 summer bushfires.
2. Australia must ensure our nature is healthy and resilient to sudden shock like the 2019-2020 bushfires, not just return the pre-bushfires population levels and ecosystem extent.
3. Establish an independent National Environment Commission to ensure we develop a fit- for-purpose, coordinated national (state and federal) system of environmental

protections and policy responses necessary to support restoration of our environment to health and ensure regulatory resilience to future impacts. Publicly report every year on the impact of conservation action and funding and show clearly whether natural values are recovering.

4. Establish a new National Environmental Act that enshrines Federal Government leadership over nature protections, contains real safeguards against extinction, including ending the destruction of endangered species habitat, and sets out clear rights of appeal and consultation for communities.
5. Establish an independent Environment Protection Agency to act as watchdog over the system and ensure our laws are properly enforced.
6. Ensure that enough funds and resources are put in place so that nature can recover.
7. Ensure a central role for community, with guaranteed rights and participation in planning and decision-making.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission.

Your sincerely,

Alisha Mercer

References

Dr Christine Adams-Hosking, Honorary Research Fellow for WWF-Australia, (May 2017). Current status of the koala in Queensland & New South Wales Available at <https://www.wwf.org.au/ArticleDocuments/353/pub-current-status-of-the-koala-in-queensland-and-new-south-wales-19may17.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y> (Assessed 16 April 2020)

Cobram Courier, (2018). Available at <https://www.cobramcourier.com.au/2018/10/18/279148/fonterra-comes-to-wildlife-rescue> (Assessed 16 April 2020)