

SUBMISSION TO THE EPBC ACT REVIEW

ANON-K57V-XZ6S-8

Name

Alice Graham

State or Territory

Tasmania

Areas of Interest

Threatened species; International obligations; Indigenous Australians; Matters of National Environmental Significance; Great Barrier Reef; Cumulative impacts; Climate change; Compliance and enforcement; Decision making; Public participation in decision making; Biodiversity; Conservation; Commonwealth national parks; 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 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:

- How the EPBC Act fails to protect the environment, especially matters of national environmental significance;
- The lack of community consultation under the current Act;
- What needs to change to ensure the EPBC Act works as it was intended.

I grew up on a farm surrounded by dry eucalypt forest on the east coast of Tasmania. My family and I enjoyed bushwalking and camping in Tasmania's beautiful National Parks and I quickly developed a love of nature- especially wildlife, rainforests, ferns, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, mountains, open plains and beaches. I enjoyed seeing native animals in their natural habitat. Now that I live in central Hobart, with a young family [REDACTED], there are less opportunities to explore in nature. As my children grow older, I look forward to taking them on more frequent and adventurous trips into wilderness areas to see the beauty and wonder that I was so lucky to experience as a child.

It breaks my heart to see and hear about the ongoing destruction of native forests, bushland and wildlife. I have seen clearfell logging coups first hand in many places around Tasmania and know that wildlife cannot survive this destruction to their habitat. I have seen logging right up to riverbeds that have dried up due to soil runoff and lack of vegetation to stabilise the soil and support the flow of water in streams. The list of threatened species increases and extinction is becoming a real possibility for many Australian animals and plants within my lifetime, as runaway climate change creates even bigger threats to nature and our survival each year.

The EPBC Act has failed to protect Australia's environment from the ever increasing threats of climate change, logging, deforestation, extinction, fossil fuel extraction and pollution from industrial projects and development. I am disappointed that state and federal governments in Australia have been continuously passing responsibility to one another when it comes to laws to protect the environment and I expect the Australian Government to:

1. Recognise that Australia cannot return to business as usual after the catastrophic bushfires of Summer 2019-2020. The same laws and policies that have failed nature and wildlife and done nothing significant to address the climate crisis, cannot be relied upon to help us recover from the bushfires.
2. Establish a new National Environment Act, which is urgently needed to make the Federal Government accountable to nature protections, containing real safeguards against extinction, including ending the destruction of endangered species habitat, setting out real rights of appeal and consultation for communities.

3. Ensure that the new nature laws develop and implement recovery plans for threatened species, which the EPBC Act has failed to do in it's 20 years.
4. Establish an independent National Environment Commission to ensure we develop an appropriate, coordinated national (state and federal) system of environmental protections and policy responses needed to support the restoration of our environment to health and ensure regulatory resilience to future impacts. This commission would need to report publicly every year on the impact of conservation action and funding, and clearly show whether or not natural values are recovering.
5. Create an independent Environmental Protection Agency to act as a watch-dog over government to ensure our laws are properly enforced.
6. Ensure that sufficient money, people and resources are put in place so nature can recover.
7. Ensure that the community has a central role to play with guaranteed rights and participation in planning and decision making.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission. If you wish to contact me, I can be contacted at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Alice Graham
Hobart, Tasmania