

# SUBMISSION TO THE EPBC ACT REVIEW

ANON-K57V-XQUE-G

## **Name**

Amy Collard

## **State or Territory**

Victoria

## **Areas of Interest**

The objects of the Act; Threatened species; International obligations; Indigenous Australians; Matters of National Environmental Significance; Environmental Impact Assessments; Climate change; 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.**

17/04/2020

Dear EPBC Review Committee,

I am writing my submission as I care deeply about strengthening our laws to protect the natural world. I work as a trauma counsellor with refugees and I also work to help the community process their grief around climate change within my private counselling practice. I see the importance of access to green spaces and a healthy ecosystem as essential to community and individual wellbeing and mental health recovery.

During the bushfires this summer, our community became acutely aware of the need to protect our parks and wildlife. The grief felt in group counselling sessions was deep. Issues were raised around the logging of forests not burned by the fires, which is still happening today despite a lack of ability of surveys to be completed in order to fully assess the impact of the fires, due to the current pandemic.

Personally, I was also involved in the defence of Great Glider habitat in the Kinglake region in July 2019 and was disappointed that our laws allowed logging at this site despite the impact on native wildlife.

I was also involved in the fight to save Djab Wurrung birthing trees. While this may be for Major Roads rather than the Environmental Protection Act, it highlighted to me the need for Indigenous voices in the way we manage our native land.

The current Act does not take seriously the preciousness of old growth forest in providing both habitat for wildlife and protection against climate change. Old growth forest cannot be regrown in our lifetime, with huge impacts to water use, habitat and ecosystems. This is at a time of higher risk of extreme events due to climate change.

Future considerations for the Environmental Protection Act should include:

- Ensuring that business as usual does not recommence after our devastating bushfire season
- Ensuring old growth forests and wildlife habitats are protected for logging for corporate organisations benefit. This is short sighted in terms of the economic gains such destruction would bring.
- Establish an independent National Environment Commission to ensure we develop a fit-for purpose, coordinated national (state and federal) system of environmental protections.
- Establish a new National Environment 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.
- Establish an independent Environment Protection Agency to ensure our laws are properly enforced.
- Ensure that sufficient money and resources are put in place so that nature can recover.
- Ensure a central role for community, with guaranteed rights and participation in planning and decision-making.
- Ensuring Indigenous land owners and Elders are given real voice and positions of power in all the above.

Thank you very much for your time.

Amy Collard

Counsellor  
BSc, GradDipPsy, MASW, MAFT



### Professional Biography

I have worked as a trauma counsellor for refugees with the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture for the previous four years. Additional to my professional qualification of Social Work, I am trained in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, EMDR and Narrative therapy. I am currently completing a Masters of Family Therapy. Over the past seven years I have published a number of research papers related to the wellbeing of refugee children and young people in connection with the University of Melbourne and Foundation House. I also have experience in the health sector, in particular aged care and sleep disorders.