

SUBMISSION TO THE EPBC ACT REVIEW

ANON-K57V-XQX1-Y

Name

Angela Eads

State or Territory

South Australia

Areas of Interest

Threatened species; Environmental Impact Assessments; Cumulative impacts; Climate change; Compliance and enforcement; 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 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. I am an animal ecological scientist, currently researching an endangered fish species in California. I grew up in Adelaide and studied environmental science at the University of Adelaide, then I moved to Perth to get my PhD in zoology. I have seen first-hand the shortcomings of our existing EPBC Act. I have worked in both Canada and the USA and it is my professional opinion that our current laws are severely lacking in their ability to truly protect our environment and natural resources for future Australians. The recent Senate Inquiry into Australia's faunal Extinction Crisis found that the EPBC Act "is incapable of addressing" our current extinction threat. And Australia's backwards actions on climate change mitigation have only compounded the stress on the already rapidly diminishing unique biodiversity of our country.

I have worked on multiple projects under the Canadian government Species at Risk Act (SARA), and was impressed with not only the regulations, policies, and guidelines, but with the implementation and ease of access and understanding. We need to develop and implement similar recovery plans for threatened species, which the Australian EPBC Act has largely failed to do in its 20 years. We have an opportunity to create something as powerful as the SARA in Australia, and we would be remiss not to consider the successful Canadian Act as a template.

The latest catastrophic bushfire season and the complete degradation of the Great Barrier Reef indicates that our natural resources are, at best, mismanaged. The lack of ecological offset areas available to vulnerable species has and will have devastating effects on extinction rates. Australia cannot return to business as usual after the existing laws and policies have failed wildlife over decades and done little to address the climate crisis. We must create a new National Environment Act that enshrines Federal Government leadership over nature protections, contains real safeguards against extinctions, including ending the destruction of endangered species habitat, gives funding to conservation science for specific biodiversity protection research, and sets out clear rights of appeal and consultation for communities. It is also vital that sufficient money, people, and resources are provided to efficiently and effectively carry out the necessary research and conservation actions.

We must establish an independent National Environment Commission to ensure we develop an effective and coordinated national (state and federal) system of environmental protections and policy responses. This is key to support environmental restoration and ensure regulatory resilience to future impacts; it will provide a method to publicly annually report on the impact of conservation funding and research and show clearly whether natural resources are recovering or degrading. Furthermore, we must establish a fully independent Environment Protection Agency to ensure our laws are properly enforced, regardless of which political party is in charge. This must include a central role for local communities, with guaranteed rights and participation in planning, decision-making, and actions.

I call on all politicians and decision-makers to take concrete action to end our extinction and deforestation crises.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission, if you wish to contact me about the contents of my submission, I can be reached at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Angela Eads
B.A./B.Sc.(Hon), PhD