

Example submission (intended as a guide only: please don't copy)

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 catastrophic affect of the 2019-2020 summer bushfires, and how we must respond as a nation;
- Major issues I see with how the EPBC Act protects our native wildlife, especially in light of 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;
- Where I think the EPBC Act and related Government policy needs to be reformed.

I live in Port Macquarie, NSW. I have lived here my entire life. I have been a part of the Port Macquarie Wilderness Society local group for three years, as well as a member of the local bushcare group for the past 13 years. I also volunteer at the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital and have been part of the recovery efforts for koalas affected by the 2019-20 bushfires.

I personally care about the protection of Australia's native species and our spiralling extinction crisis. I care passionately about this issue because while I was growing up, Port Macquarie was a very important spot for koalas. In the 1960s, my mother drove me to school in town and I would count a koala in every tree on the way there and on the way back.

Over the last 20 years, this area has seen widespread logging and deforestation, and the koalas have disappeared along with most of their habitat. Now there are very few koalas in my area, and the recent bushfires have likely killed off the last remaining koala colony near me. This was a state significant colony, important for the future of the species.

This is backed up by national data showing a decline in koalas all around NSW, Qld and the ACT (WWF-Australia Report (2017) *Current status of the koala in QLD and NSW*). The 2016 State of the Environment Report found that this decline is happening across the board to nearly all of 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 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 wildlife over decades and done little to mitigate the climate crisis can't be relied on to help us recover after the bushfires.
2. Australia must ensure our nature is healthy and resilient to sudden shocks like the 2019-2020 bushfires, not just return the pre-bushfire 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 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.
5. Establish an independent Environment Protection Agency to act as watchdog over the system and ensure our laws are properly enforced.
6. Ensure that sufficient money 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.