



**Wilderness
Society**

Life. Support.

The 2019-2020 EPBC Act Review

The issue

- 1. Australia's national environment law - the EPBC Act - has failed to protect wildlife or their homes. It is outdated, inadequate and not enforced.**
- 2. A mandatory, decadal review of the EPBC Act started October 2019**
- 3. Vested interests are mobilising to wind back the laws further and, right now, they're the only voices Gov't are hearing**
- 4. We need Gov't to hear from the majority of Australians who want laws that work to save our species and their homes**

Why are we taking part in the EPBC Review?

- Balance the voice of vested interests and demonstrate real community concern
- Push the Review Panel to include our asks and our stories in the final Review report
- Increase the pressure on polities around Australia's extinction crisis



The 2019-2020 EPBC Act Review

The process

1. Submit through the EPBC Act Review Website (epbcactreview.environment.gov.au)
2. Submissions are until 17 April 2020 (deadline extended).
3. Write your submission and send it to the review panel, send a copy to Wilderness Society
4. Ask your networks to write submissions, host submissions parties, write group / family / team submissions

Why do we write submissions?



To be heard by the government and decision making bodies during the community consultation.

To demonstrate community interest to decision makers on a topic or issue

To put forward your case in a meaningful way.



**Your experiences
and others people's
view matter!**

The right message, the right messenger

- **Organisational (e.g. TWS):** in-depth/complex treatment of issues, expert testimony, set forth policy solutions
- **Local or community team** (e.g. TWS local groups, local bushcare society etc.)
- **TWS community leader, team member or Community member:** Short, personal concerns, template-based

All calling for the same thing, difference is in level of detail

Individual submissions

Individual submissions demonstrate:

- Lived experience: Your stories of nature decline, specific aspects you care most about
- Focus on story, anecdote backed by data (e.g. article from ABC Fact Check)

Writing your submission

Preparation:



- Epubcactreview.org.au sets out the established process for making your submission.
 - There is an official page with Terms of Reference and a [Discussion Paper](#)
 - You can submit your submission online or via email
- Always check for, and be aware of the [terms of reference](#).
- Consider making several submissions (e.g. team submission).
- Be aware of external factors that may strengthen your submission.

How do I write a submission?

1. Address the review panel, Prof Samuels and Review Panel
2. Introduce yourself and your stake in the issue
3. Introduce what your submission is in relation to
4. Focus on top issue(s) for you, e.g. deforestation, species extinction, community input and use your personal experience
5. Provide some evidence that supports each of your statements (but you don't need to be an expert!)
6. Make recommendations and solutions if you can.

Hot tips:

- Use direct language and seek to make a point and then justify it with evidence or an example.
- Feel free to speak about emotion and intrinsic value, if it's yours, your team's or reported to you by a community member
 - E.g. Many in my team joined TWS specifically because they love this local patch of bush - it is important to their social life (give e.g.), their mental health (give e.g.) and communities (give e.g.); We spoke to 100 people, 75 said they cared about X.
- Keep your tone formal and factual but not academic. Make statements of fact clear and back up with third party evidence if possible.
- Reference third-party evidence (MSM news articles, academic journals ok; Wikipedia/Green Left Weekly to be avoided)

Do nots!

- You should not be overly critical of any individual person or process unless it is clearly justifiable (e.g. Minister failing to enforce law or undertake required processes)
- No swearing, abuse or threats. Ever.
- Don't use persuasive language or rhetorical flourishes (e.g. *“Nothing ever happens with offsets or if it does it's such a tiny effort one wonders why they bothered in the first place . It's just a useful sentiment to appease the public somewhat and used to strong arm approvals through.”*)

Example submission structure

- I personally care about X issue and here is why (e.g. I grew up playing in that creek, I saw many koalas when I was young, I visit the world heritage area every year etc)
- The thing I care about is under threat and I am worried that the situation is getting worse (provide anecdote AND anecdote)
- I am disappointed that the situation is not being dealt with and I expect X to happen (e.g. the creek to be cleaned up, the koala to recover, the world heritage area to be protected from Y etc)
- Here is what I think should happen (e.g. strong laws to protect wildlife and their homes, independent enforcement etc).
- 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 **[email]**

To keep in mind:

- Research the Review panel so you know who you're talking to
- Not shorter than 300 words and NOT longer than 4 pages.
- Consider using bullet points and tables where appropriate.
- Do not include anything you would not like made public.
- Thank the decision maker for their time and consideration.
- Include your contact details in appropriate place.



Leveraging the impact of your submission

- Consider emailing your submission to other stakeholders **who are able to influence the decision (e.g. your MP, Councillor)**
 - MUST INCLUDE a clear request for action and follow-up, not just ask to read
- Engage and support family, friends, community members to put in their own submissions



Questions?

Let's get practical!!!

- **Species extinction**
- **Climate change**
- **Deforestation**
- **Weak level of prosecution**
- **Overriding State legislation**
- **No environmental protection body to oversee compliance**
- **No independent body to scientifically review approvals**
- **Reduce Ministerial oversight of approval process**