



Dear Senator Lambie

We are writing to you today, on behalf of Animal Protector Alliance members across all Australian jurisdictions, to urge you that you reject the Morrison Government's premature amendment to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Streamlining Environmental Approvals) Bill 2020. You have shown yourself, in the past, to be a person of conscience, and we hope you will understand that the potential impacts of this bill place the future of the life-support systems of our nation in jeopardy.

We need your voice in the Parliament right now to protect the country's biodiversity: the native animals, and the plants and ecosystems upon which all life, including human life, depends. This is what the EPBC Act was intended to do. The EPBC Act subscribes to the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Development which means that no development should be permitted unless it is ecologically sustainable. However, most economic developments since the Act was passed have continued to be ecologically devastating.

The EPBC Act has failed to do its job, largely due to the power it continues to delegate to state governments. By further devolving the Act's responsibilities to the states, the Australian Government would be abandoning its single most important responsibility to the nation. It would be inviting an exponential increase in the open slather on biodiversity which has already made Australia a world leader in the current global mass extinction event (see the 2019 letter to the Prime Minister by 248 scientists: "In the last decade alone three of our native species have been wiped out. Another 17 animals could go extinct in the next 20 years." <https://www.envirolawsopenletter.com.au/>)

Native bats, which are essential pollinators, are persecuted across the country at state and local levels. Similarly, kangaroos provide critical ecological services, maintaining a high level of botanical diversity and richness on which other native wildlife (eg reptiles and insects) depend for their very survival. Yet millions every year are subjected to 'harvesting' and 'culling' across the country, on the basis of spurious assertions that they are 'overgrazing' and that their populations need to be 'managed'.

These species cannot sustain the current level of persecution, and they cannot continue their critical contributions to the our ecosystems from a base of such vastly reduced numbers. We will very surprised (if delighted) if these species escape the next swathe of Australian extinctions.



In fact, based on the area of habitat they have lost to livestock grazing, it has been estimated that kangaroo numbers may be as low as 10% of their numbers at the time of European settlement. Like many other native animals, kangaroos are slow breeders, bearing only one young a year, and only when feed is plentiful, so it will be long before they recover from such a catastrophic decline; if they recover at all.

By contrast, many naturalised animals that are considered to be invasive are fast-breeders. It is the nature of biology and mathematics that sustained lethal control such as using 1980 poison maintains fast-breeding animals at higher populations than if you leave them alone. While sustained lethal control of slow-breeding animals is a sure-fire route to extinction. Nevertheless, all Australian governments appear to be hell-bent on continuing both these policies, with a total disregard to science and arithmetic, and to the cruelty to which both native and naturalised animals are routine subjected.

Most bats and kangaroo species, along with emus, dingos, wombats, wallabies, possums, and many of Australia's unique wild birds, are shot, poisoned or otherwise killed in vast numbers, with the ready permission of state governments, because they are considered 'abundant' or 'common'. In fact these species are abundant only because Australian ecosystems evolved to need extremely large numbers of these animals to maintain the land and the forests to the benefit of all species.

Koalas are now at a critical point as a result of state development policies which allow rampant habitat/vegetation removal, logging, reckless urban planning, and inappropriate fire prevention action. The recent catastrophe for Murray Darling ecosystems and river species was accomplished under state-driven management.

Professor Graeme Samuel, who headed the review of the EPBC Act, stated that the Act has failed its mandate to date. We urge you to make the case and vote on behalf of Australia's wildlife and ecosystems. It is quite clear that we cannot now continue on the road of state-based destruction, and certainly not in haste with poorly thought-out policy.



In his interim independent statutory review of EPBC ACT(backed by 30,000 public submissions), Professor Samuel stated that Australia's ecosystems need legally enforceable national standards to avert further ecological catastrophes. At the least, Parliament must wait for his final report before proceeding.

We need strong federal protections for our country's biodiversity, and life support systems. Please represent us.

Yours sincerely

Frankie Seymour and Robyn Soxsmith  
On behalf of Animal Protectors Alliance  
2 September 2020