

7<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
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Senate Inquiry Submission re proposed amendments to the  
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT, 1999.

The Senate should reject this legislation because

1. It deprives the Minister for the Environment of the power to restrain greenhouse gas emissions though global warming is the biggest threat to Australia's natural environment. That is like requiring the Treasurer to manage the economy without the power to raise taxes.
2. There is no provision to end the destruction of native forests and woodlands although loss of habitat poses the greatest direct threat of extinction to Australia's flora and fauna. That is like requiring a Minister for Police to improve public safety and wellbeing without tackling organised crime.

It is not possible to judge the lack of needed teeth in this legislation without first assessing the spiral-down of national and global environmental wellbeing.

More than most other nations, Australia is contributing to global warming and species extinction. H sapiens is over-consuming the planet's storehouse of natural plenitude and Australians are amongst the greatest consumers. No other storehouse of nature is available. Four pointers to this urgent dilemma facing life on Earth might be considered first.

1. The Worldwide Fund for Nature says there was an average 73% decline in monitored wildlife populations between 1970 and 2020. (That rate of decline is increasing.)
2. This year the UK Institute and Faculty of Actuaries and the University of Exeter assessed the global risk management of our impact on nature. Their report provides a table showing the Planetary Solvency risk impact and likelihood matrix at figure 12. If the current 1.5 degrees increase in average global temperatures above past normality rises to 2 degrees by 2050, global domestic product will fall by 25% and more than 2 billion human deaths



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may be expected. If the average temperature rises to 3 degrees, double those outcomes. Projected Australian policy, endorsed and unhindered by the government's proposed legislation, and with other governments behaving similarly, means there is no sensible hope of containing global warming below 2 degrees by 2050.

3. This legislation, based on the ideal of faster, more business approvals impacting on nature, is not fit for the purpose of protecting nature.
4. Earth's finite biosphere cannot accommodate growing resource extraction.

The legislation is replete with weasel words exempting the government from protecting the environment. It is not fit for purpose. Amongst its other shortcomings:

- discretionary ministerial powers to facilitate business over nature,
- a "pay-to-destroy" offsets model that proposes payments, tax-deductible, for business proponents to buy nature destruction,
- national responsibility for protecting nature is to be handed to a polyglot of proven ill-equipped or failed states and territories,
- First Nations rights are sidelined, with no free, prior and informed consent.
- an effective exemption for radiological impacts for mining and processing of rare earths and mineral sands,
- curtailing reconsideration powers where projects are found to have unforeseen impacts
- continuation of the ecologically disastrous Regional Forest Agreements and effective exemptions from the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for logging unded RFAs.

On behalf of our Foundation, Dr Bob Brown, Scott Jordan and Jenny Weber request the opportunity to appear as witnesses to the committee. We would be available on 14, 20 or 21st November.

Bob Brown Foundation reserves the right to submit a supplementary submission to the committee in due course.

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