

The Effectiveness of Threatened Species and Ecological Communities' Protection in Australia Senate Inquiry

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Dear Committee

I would recommend that we emulate the benchmark set by Bhutan in 2008. That we enact a concomitant *Constitution of our Natural Environment* such as the template set by the people of Bhutan:

1. Every Australian is a trustee of the nation's natural resources and environment for the benefit of the present and future generations and it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to contribute to the protection of the natural environment, conservation of the rich biodiversity of Australia and prevention of all forms of ecological degradation including noise, visual and physical pollution through the adoption and support of environment friendly practices and policies.
2. The Federal Government shall:
 - (a) Protect, conserve and improve the pristine environment and safeguard the biodiversity of the country;
 - (b) Prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
 - (c) Secure ecologically balanced sustainable development while promoting justifiable economic and social development; and
 - (d) Ensure a safe and healthy environment.
3. The Government shall ensure that, in order to conserve the country's natural resources and to prevent degradation of the ecosystem, a minimum of sixty percent of Australia's total land shall be maintained under forest cover for all time.
4. Parliament may enact environmental legislation to ensure sustainable use of natural resources and maintain intergenerational equity and reaffirm the sovereign rights of the State over its own biological resources.
5. Parliament may declare any part of the country to be a National Park, Wildlife Reserve, Nature Reserve, Protected Forest, Biosphere Reserve, Critical Watershed, World Heritage Area and such other categories meriting protection.

From my extensive observation of current state run forestry management the accumulated impact of RFA native forest logging needs to be scrutinised, but alas the state run logging agency in my local area is operating on expired ESFM plans among others - indeed most management plans are long overdue. The state regulator for these activities has little effect on daily logging practices on the slopes of our catchments, due to being chronically under-resourced. Over the past five year period auditing could only occur in 3% of all compartments logged. This is resulting in our productive forests becoming ecological deserts, a clear example of this is the localised extinction of the Eurobodalla koala population which has occurred during the current RFA period.

Thank you for your inquiry.