



22 April 2024

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP  
Minister for the Environment and Water  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Dear Prime Minister and Minister Plibersek

### **Securing strong nature laws this term**

Action for Dolphins is a charity dedicated to the conservation of marine life and the protection of the ocean. I am writing to you on behalf of Action for Dolphins and 4,245 people who have signed a petition urging the Australian Government to commit to introducing the full package of the Nature Positive plan reforms this term.

We commend Minister Plibersek's announcement to progress stage 2 of the Nature Positive Plan, including the establishment of Environment Protection Australia, the creation of Environment Information Australia and investing nearly \$100 million to assist with the efficiency of the environmental approval process. These are positive steps towards a more robust environmental protection framework.

However, we are deeply concerned about the delay in enacting Stage 3 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) reforms. The Samuel Review highlighted the urgent need for a complete overhaul of Australia's environmental laws, and we believe that delaying Stage 3 weakens the overall impact of these reforms.

Our ocean, endangered species, and iconic ecosystems like the Great Barrier Reef are facing consistent and foreseeable threats. The current EPBC Act is simply not fit for purpose and is failing to adequately protect these vital parts of Australia's natural heritage.

We strongly urge the Government to introduce the full package of EPBC Act reforms, particularly the substantive Stage 3 reforms, during this term of Parliament. Our marine environment cannot afford further delays.

We understand the consultation for these reforms have been underway for some time, and we commend the Government for committing to continue with a robust consultation process.

We believe that the complete package of EPBC Act reforms is essential for a healthier and more sustainable future for Australia. We urge you to prioritise the swift enactment of Stage 3 reforms to ensure a robust legal framework for environmental protection.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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CEO | Action for Dolphins

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30 April 2024

The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister  
Via Email

CC: The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water

Dear Prime Minister,

Australia's Great Barrier Reef is in grave danger due to repeated severe bleaching events driven by climate pollution, with not enough time to recover in the gaps between events.

This is the worst heat stress event for the Great Barrier Reef on record, which is undergoing widespread and severe bleaching as a result.

This is the fifth mass bleaching event in nine years. Previous mass bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef occurred in 1998, 2002, 2016, 2017, 2020, and 2022. All were due to unprecedented heat stress caused by climate change.

Since the last mass bleaching in 2022, at least five coal and gas projects have been approved by the Labor Government under Australia's outdated national environment law: the EPBC Act.

Unfortunately, instead of the progress we were promised when the overhaul of this Act was announced, we now have no clear timeline of when this will occur.


Australia's new national nature protection laws must be delivered before the end of this term. And they must include a clear requirement to assess whether projects will cause more climate harm for nature as part of the assessment process. Given the damage climate change does to nature, it would be reckless to do otherwise.

There is strong scientific, community and parliamentary support for the Albanese government to thoroughly embed climate change considerations into the new laws.

Australia is the world's third largest fossil fuel exporter. Climate change is global, so no matter where in the world Australia's coal and gas exports are burnt, they damage nature here at home, which is precisely why our nature laws must consider potential climate impacts, including direct and downstream pollution.







Climate Action Burwood-Canada Bay is a not-for-profit, non-political community group advocating a science-based approach to the issue of climate change.

- BURWOOD -  
**CLIMATE  
ACTION**  
- CANADA BAY -

8/5/24

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay, a community-based organisation working in the Reid Electorate in NSW to inform residents and business people about ways to improve their personal health and lower their greenhouse gas emissions.

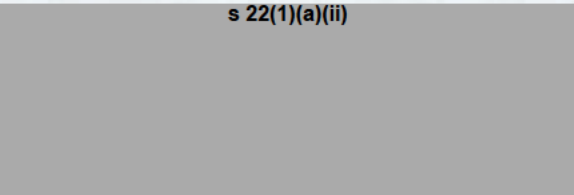
While we have been pleased with many of the initiatives introduced by your government since it came to office, not everything is to our liking. A particular example is the decision to divide the proposed EPBC Act (DRAFT) into two parts, and to proceed only with the establishment of the two agencies that will work under the confines of the existing Act. This means that the development of nature positive legislation, as promised prior in the last federal election campaign, has no shape or substance and no date when it will re-surface.

This seems to us to be a political decision, with the government unwilling to offend mining groups or the Minerals Council, upset the WA Government or stir opposition in coal communities. Yet again the Government is taking the road of of least resistance, while achieving very little. This does not appease many Australians, particularly those in the climate and environmental movements. To keep the votes of the latter, the government will need to demonstrate that it can legislate for a more environmentally sound Australia and for healthy, resilient communities.

We, therefore, suggest that you set a date for the new EPBC nature-positive laws to be tabled in Parliament before the next election. In our view, this would signal strong, ethical leadership and intelligent governance and increase Labor's chances of re-election.


Yours sincerely

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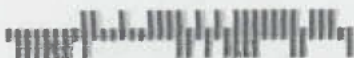
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s 22(1)(a)(ii)



The Hon. Anthony Albanese  
Prime Minister  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600



Contact: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

CEO, Vets for Climate Action

E: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

M: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Cc: The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water

05 June 2024

Dear Prime Minister

As veterinary professionals and animal carers, we write to you on this World Environment Day because we are concerned about the impact of climate change on the health and welfare of our unique animals.

Our current national environment laws (the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) are out of date, and no longer able to provide the protection that our wildlife, and the habitats they live in, require to keep them safe and healthy on a rapidly heating planet. These laws are currently under review, and we are calling for them to be immediately strengthened. Our unique animals and ecosystems are under threat.

Australia is home to between 600,000 - 700,000 species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. About 84% of our plants, 83% of mammals, and 45% of birds are only found in Australia.

But Australia also has the unenviable record of the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. For example, the Bramble Cay melomys, a small rodent in the Torres Strait Islands, is the first mammal to become extinct explicitly due to climate change, and 78 species in NSW alone have been declared extinct since European settlement.

With over 2,200 ecological communities, plants, and animal species on the Government's threatened species list nationally, it is urgent that the Federal Government deliver on its commitment to prioritise strong, new nature protection laws this year.

We commend the Government’s introduction of an Environment Protection Australia (EPA) and Environment Information Australia, and the focus on compliance and enforcement of our existing nature laws. These are very necessary and long overdue. However, they are not enough.

We are urgently calling on the Government to introduce a comprehensive package of nature law reforms to protect our unique wildlife and their habitats.

This must include:

- Climate change to be made a ‘Matter of National Environmental Significance’
- Mandatory consideration of climate impacts in project assessments
- EPA assessment of projects to include total CO2 and other climate pollutants, and take account of the estimated cumulative emissions
- Strong and enforceable National Environmental Standards
- The national environment law should be explicitly linked to other Australian Government climate priorities and commitments, including the Paris Agreement, Safeguard Mechanism, and national *Climate Change Act*.

These changes are vital to ensure that our national environment laws “better protect nature, and that we are invested to protect our precious plants and animals.”<sup>1</sup> We ask that they are implemented in full as soon as possible.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss any of these issues further.

On behalf of the animals we love and care for,

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<sup>1</sup> Minister Plibersek, Press Conference, Taronga Zoo, NSW, 22 May 2024



## **ABOUT VETS FOR CLIMATE ACTION**

Caring for animals means caring for the climate.

Vets for Climate Action represents vets, vet nurses, vet receptionists, vet techs, animal carers, pet owners and animal lovers. We are united by our concern by the impact climate change is already having on the animals we love: our pets, wildlife and livestock.

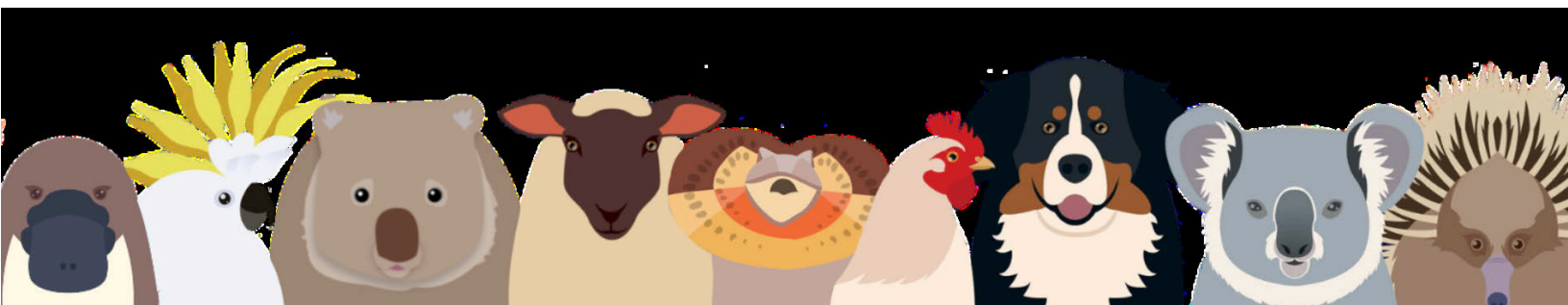
From days of extreme heat, longer bushfire seasons, floods and intense storms, increased risk of disease - our animals are feeling the effects most strongly but hold no responsibility for the problem.

At Vets for Climate Action, we are working to inspire and educate both within the veterinary profession and beyond, to the wider community.

We are working to protect biodiversity and recognise that the health of people, animals and the environment are interconnected in line with the One Health concept.

We are advocating for immediate action on climate change - we want strong policy and strong leadership - across all levels of government, from industry and across our profession to enable a world where animals and people thrive in a healthy climate.

We are working together to promote sustainable veterinary care with our world-first Climate Care Program: an innovative, world-first management tool designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase sustainability in veterinary practice.



## AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS SUFFER AND DIE DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**An Australian rodent in the Torres Strait Islands, the Bramble Cay melomys, is the first mammal to become extinct due to climate change.** Rising sea levels and storm surges resulted in loss of habitat.

During the migratory season of 2023 thousands of **seabird deaths** were reported along the Australian coast. The scientific community is seeing a correlation with marine heat waves caused by climate change<sup>2</sup>.

The declining sea ice between 2018 and 2022 caused by climate change is responsible for the **complete and catastrophic loss of all emperor penguin chicks** from 4 out of 5 colonies in Antarctica in the spring of 2022.

Numbats are becoming prone to overheating – reaching a body temperature greater than 40°C within as little as ten minutes of activity in the sun, despite using techniques such as raising or flattening their fur to regulate body temperature.<sup>3</sup>

**Coral on the Great Barrier Reef has been killed by successive mass bleaching events** due to rising ocean temperatures. This brings long term risks not only to the reef itself but to the diversity of marine fauna living within the reef, including dugong and marine turtles.

**Green turtles are at risk of extinction as their gender ratio becomes distorted.**<sup>4</sup> The sex of a sea turtle is determined by the temperature of the sand incubating the eggs. Warmer temperatures of 29.1 degrees Celsius and above produce females and cooler temperatures produce males. Global warming means more females are born, disrupting the natural gender ratio. It is possible that sea turtle hatchlings could be completely female in the near future.

**Over 3 billion animals died or were displaced during the 2019-2020 bushfires:**

- 143 million mammals;
- 2.46 billion reptiles;
- 180 million birds; and
- 51 million frogs.<sup>5</sup>

'This ranks as one of the worst wildlife disasters in modern history,' reported the WWF.

**More than 23,000 spectacled flying foxes were killed**<sup>6</sup> in far north Queensland, when temperatures were over 42°C, equating to almost one in every three individual animals in the population, which is listed as endangered under the EPBC Act.

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<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/science-environment/2023/11/why-are-we-seeing-so-many-seabird-wrecks/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2024/01/too-hot-to-handle>

<sup>4</sup> Craig Welch, [Rising Temperatures Cause Sea Turtles to turn Female](#), National Geographic, 9 Jan 2018, access 28 October 2022.

<sup>5</sup> p. 2, [Interim Report: Australia's 2019-2020 Bushfires: The Wildlife Toll, WWF](#), 28 July 2020, accessed 28 October 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Sharnie Kim & Adam Stephen, [Extreme heat wipes out almost one third of Australia's spectacled flying fox population](#), ABC News, 19 Dec 2018, accessed 28 October 2022.

**127 ringtail possums died**<sup>7</sup> after they became so dehydrated they drank sea water after 4 days of temperatures in the high 30s, in the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria in early 2019.

**Floods in Far North Queensland killed over 600,000 cattle in 2019.**<sup>8</sup> Those that didn't drown died of cold exposure in the summer month of February. The damage bill was estimated at \$2 billion.

**Flooding in NSW and southern Queensland in 2022 affected an estimated 475,000 cattle (or about 2% of the national herd).**<sup>9</sup> It also impacted food and feed crops.

**Severe flooding in eastern Australia in 2022** trapped and drowned wombats and echidnas (and other burrowing animals) in their burrows. An estimated 475,000 grazing animals (or about 2% of the national herd)<sup>10</sup> were swept away or starved when dirty water contaminated their pastures. It also impacted food and feed crops. Even marine species, turtles and seabirds were displaced when floodwaters reached the ocean.

**Dogs or other pets can develop severe heat stress, brain damage and die** in as little as 4 to 6 minutes if left unattended in a vehicle. The risks of this are increasing with more heat waves, as is the probability of dogs burning their footpads when walking, as roads and footpaths heat up so much more than the air.

A United Nations report has determined that about one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, many within decades, more than ever before in human history. Biodiversity is essential for the processes that support all life on Earth, including human life. An average 69% decline in monitored wildlife populations has been recorded around the world between 1970 and 2018.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Lisa Cox, [‘Falling out of tree’: dozens of dead possums blamed on extreme heat stress](#), The Guardian, 7 March 2019, accessed 28 October 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Tom Major, [Cattle, infrastructure losses following Queensland floods could near \\$2b, farm lobby says](#), ABC News, 16 April 2019, accessed 28 October 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Natasha May, [Floods and livestock losses leave NSW and Queensland farmers reeling from third disaster in three years](#), The Guardian, 2 March 2022, accessed 28 October 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Natasha May, [Floods and livestock losses leave NSW and Queensland farmers reeling from third disaster in three years](#), The Guardian, 2 March 2022, accessed 28 October 2022.

<sup>11</sup> [UN report on biodiversity loss](#)

14 June 2024



Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

## **STAGE 2 NATURE POSITIVE LEGISLATION**

As the peak representative body for the resources sector in Western Australia, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia (CME) wishes to raise concerns regarding the Government's approach to the Nature Positive reforms and specifically the three Nature Positive Bills<sup>1</sup> which are currently before the Parliament.

The proposed reforms have a direct and significant relevance within Western Australia, noting Western Australian projects make up 72 per cent of Australia's committed resources projects by value at \$55.9 billion. In 2022-23, the Western Australian resources sector accounted for 64 per cent of Australia's resources exports, half of Australia's resources capital expenditure and 53 per cent of Australian resources employment. Additionally, Western Australia hosts the largest number of existing and proposed hydrogen projects and over half of Australia's major critical minerals projects, with a third of this investment pipeline's value attributable to our members.

CME and our members are in full support of reforms that improve environmental outcomes across the economy whilst delivering processing efficiencies. But we can only hope to achieve these outcomes if industry is provided the opportunity to review and test the reforms, and there is the willingness to make adjustments where required.

It is disappointing the stage 2 Nature Positive Bills were not released for public consultation prior to introduction into Parliament and we request that the Regulatory Impact Assessment referred to in the Explanatory Memorandum is released.

As we have articulated through the closed consultation process to date, CME and our members feel it is critical that the assessment of proposed development projects is guided by the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and that ultimate responsibility for the balanced application of these principles, particularly for complex, nationally significant projects, properly rests with the elected Government of the day.

CME members are concerned an eroding of these principles is already being observed and could be compounded if the broad and significant changes proposed under the Nature Positive reforms are not subject to proper review and testing. Unworkable settings risk causing further project delays and uncertainty, making it harder to deliver projects in Western Australia and negatively impacting the viability of the projects required to support our domestic and global energy transition and our economy.

In the lead up to the introduction of the stage 2 Bills, CME wrote to the Minister for Environment and Water urging additional consultation and highlighting industry's strong preference that the EPA's function be limited to compliance and auditing. In summary, key issues and recommendations we have raised include:

- It is important that the Government retains the ability to set clear expectations and that the EPA operates consistently with the Government's priorities and policy objectives. Appropriate checks on independence are required to provide certainty for proponents and ensure a focus on outcomes. We

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<sup>1</sup> Nature Positive (Environment Information Australia) Bill 2024 (EIA Bill); Nature Positive (Environment Protection Australia) Bill 2024 (EPA Bill); and Nature Positive (Environment Law Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2024 (Transition Bill).

also recommend the first statutory review of EPA operations and performance occurs no later than 18 months after establishment.

- With respect to penalties it is important that legislation clearly reflects the proportionality principle and provides for discretion to utilise a range of compliance mechanisms which are reflective of environmental risk. Retrospective application of the amended penalty regime to conditions of existing approvals is also of concern.
- Elements of the Bills which are intended to improve processing efficiencies may have limited effectiveness. For example, the request for information (RFI) framework should be enhanced to require justification for the request based on risk and materiality.

The stage 2 Bills, as introduced, do not adequately address these concerns. Further, suggestions for the inclusion of a 'climate trigger' risk derailing both the current reform process and the achievement of stated objectives. The independent review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act) conducted by Professor Graeme Samuel AC specifically ruled out a climate trigger, noting that federal legislation to manage carbon emissions already exists.

CME supports the Paris Agreement and we continue to advocate for a single national framework to achieve the national objectives legislated in the *Climate Change Act 2022* in a coordinated and efficient manner. This is important to provide policy stability and investment certainty for industry.

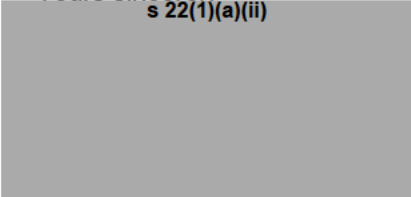
Last year the Government reformed the Safeguard Mechanism to ensure decarbonisation trajectories for heavy industry were aligned with Australia's legislated climate targets. Duplicating these requirements in a different regulatory framework will not help with the decarbonisation challenge. In fact, it will make it more difficult, creating a complex compliance and regulatory regime, with regulatory inconsistency adding significant costs to business and diverting focus from the important job of decarbonising our sector.

Regulatory uncertainty further reduces the attractiveness of our projects to compete for the highly contested international investment they need to decarbonise.

We note the broader stage 3 Nature Positive reform consultation process is continuing at pace and we would welcome your assurance that a 'climate trigger' will not be considered as part of the stage 2 legislative package.

I understand you will be in Perth next week and I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues directly with you.

Yours sincerely  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)



Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Hon. Madeleine King MP, Hon. Roger Cook MLA