



## **Australian Government**

Australian Government response to the  
Senate Environment and Communications References Committee  
Interim Report:

Australia's extinction crisis

October 2024

## Introduction

The Environment and Communications Reference Committee began the inquiry into Australia's extinction crisis on 27 June 2018 under the previous inquiry name 'Australia's faunal extinction crisis'. The May 2024 interim report of the Committee on Australia's extinction crisis focuses on the Australian Government's reform's to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

## Response

### Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Australian Government urgently and unequivocally commit to publicly releasing exposure draft legislation of the full package of reforms to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for consultation ahead of passage of piecemeal legislation in the Parliament.

### Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Australian Government commit to a timeframe for the introduction into the Parliament of the full package of Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 reforms as outlined in the Nature Positive Plan. This timeframe should allow a reasonable period for all necessary legislation to be passed before the end of the 47th Parliament.

### Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the timeframe in recommendation 2 be published by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on its EPBC Act reform webpage.

## Response to all

NOTED

The Australian Government's Nature Positive environmental law reforms are being progressed in 3 stages:

- The first stage established the Nature Repair market and expanded the water trigger.
- Stage 2 establishes Environment Protection Australia (EPA) and the Head of Environment Information Australia (EIA).
- The third stage of reform will complete the environmental law reforms as outlined in the Nature Positive Plan.

The first stage of the reforms was completed in December 2023. Legislation to implement the second stage of the reforms was introduced into Parliament on 28 May 2024.

The third stage of environmental law reforms will include release of a comprehensive exposure draft of the new laws for public consultation before their introduction to Parliament.

## Dissenting recommendations from the Australian Greens

### Dissenting recommendation 1

Introduce a full package of environment laws to this Parliament that end native forest logging and ensure new coal and gas projects are properly assessed for their climate impacts to stop the expansion of further fossil fuels.

### Dissenting recommendation 2

Commit to a timeframe for an exposure draft of standalone First Nations cultural heritage legislation and full implementation of Chapter 2 of the Samuel Review.

### Response to all

NOTED

The Australian Government's Nature Positive environmental law reforms as set out in the *Nature Positive Plan: better for the environment, better for business*, also address both Regional Forest Agreements and development assessment and approval processes.

The government is committed to strengthening protections for First Nations cultural heritage and is working in partnership with the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance to co-design a reform framework.

