

You (the Govt) are jeopardizing our lives and the health of the biosphere of this planet to such a degree, that it is now no longer acceptable.

Who else has the power to halt the blatant removal of Australia's native and old-growth forests?

You are likely to be held legally accountable for such irresponsibility in regards to this country's living systems in the coming weeks and months. The past actions of the Australian Government have led to the point which we are now at - the point of 'no return' in regards to climate change. Not only do we need to reduce our emissions; we need to now *remove* existing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Changing the EPBC Act so that it effectively and immediately protects all of Australia's remaining old-growth and native forests, as well as our country's river systems, oceans and waterways, and all remaining native species and their habitats, is the only redeeming action left to take at this point in time.

A 'whole systems approach' is desperately required, which considers Australia's natural environment in relation to it's overall contribution to the global biosphere.

NASA have two satellites, 'Terra' & 'Aqua', which show the rate at which plant life is absorbing carbon out of the atmosphere. Every 8 days the world's 'net primary production' is measured, which is how much CO<sub>2</sub> is taken in by vegetation during photosynthesis minus respiration. It is effectively a global measure of the biological productivity of plants, which is a direct contributor to the health of our biosphere.

Is *this* Government aware of just how much valuable oxygen our forests are producing every day, not just for this country, but for the actual planet?

Are you working with scientists to see just how much forest we are losing each day, and how much we actually have left?

The following are suggestions of changes to be made to the EPBC Act:

1. To remove Clause 38 from the EBBC Act, which exempts areas that have an RFA signed. This is due to the reality that RFA's do not assure compliance with the Act. If they did comply, they'd be no conflict with the Act being in force. Yet the opposite has occurred - RFA managed regions, such as East Gippsland, have become a case of 'the rules do not apply to us'.

In other words, flagrant mismanagement of natural resources.

2. If species are at the brink of extinction, then the Act should come into effect.

Errinundra Plateau is National Estate listed, which confirms it has values the Commonwealth ought to protect. There are many rare and endangered species living within the Plateau. Yet it is being woodchipped every day.

3. To review the process by which the DSE label ecosystems. The upper and lower parts of East Gippsland, for example, have not

been correctly classified as either rare or endangered ecosystems. Yet in fact, they are just that. The reality is that this area is globally unique - the particular types of forest there, (Gondwana remnants) and the unique mix of different types of forest, are of such value that they require immediate global protection, and have the potential for international eco-tourism interest.

4. To immediately force the timber industry (particularly in Victoria) to comply with EPBC & FFG Action Statements, and improve prescriptions to meet current legal minimum standards.

For the timber industry to undertake a marketing study and efficiency analysis, with the idea of just cutting the wood they need and leaving the rest standing. This would be a massive change from the current practice of clearfelling for woodchips.

A forest ecologist could conduct a pre-logging survey and carefully plan tree removal around conservation values.

To conclude, some of the tallest, oldest and wettest forests existing on this planet, that happen to exist on specific parts of the Australian continent, have been clearfelled, never to return.

Specifically, within the area of East Gippsland, known as Errinundra Plateau and Goolengook.

(For example, the forests that used to exist along Survey Rd, near Tea Tree Flat; either side of Playgrounds Rd, between Bonang River and Bidwell Creek; Bee Tree Hill ).

Many people have experienced these areas before they were destroyed - when they were in their unique, pristine state. Some of these treasured forests have been captured on film and in photos. The area is not called 'the emerald jewel in the crown' for nothing.

The EPBC Act failed in protecting these areas from a deliberate onslaught of destruction in the form of Government-sponsored woodchipping.

Now it remains to be seen whether this current Government can act quickly enough, to protect what's left.

The biospheric integrity of this continent depends on it.

Yours sincerely,

Kellie Gee