

Letter to: Melissa Price <Melissa.Price.MP@aph.gov.au>
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Subject: Forest threatened species need your help

11 Sept 2018

To the Hon. Melissa Price MP Minister for the Environment,

Congratulations on your recent appointment as the Federal Minister for the Environment. To mark National Threatened Species Day I respectfully call on you to take strong action to protect Australia's forest-dependant threatened species that are under immense pressure from native forest logging operations.

I call on you to:

- Allow the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) to expire. The RFAs have failed to achieve positive environmental outcomes for forest dependant threatened species. These agreements provide the native forest logging sector with an exemption from Federal environment law. When an action that threatens a matter of national environmental significance, such as a threatened species, it must ordinarily be assessed under federal law and can only be approved with conditions that responsibly manage those threats. Under the RFAs, the threats native logging poses to threatened species are not assessed because of the exemption. I call on you to allow the RFAs to expire. Since the RFAs were signed over 20 years ago forest dependent species have slid further towards extinction. Logging continues to impact on critically important habitat for threatened species with impunity from Federal laws. The demonstrable failure of the RFAs provides sound evidence of the need to reform our environment laws and create a new suite of national nature laws that provide strong protections for threatened species, based on robust science not the interests of industry.
- Ensure that threatened species recovery plans are based on modern and robust science. It is of critical importance that recovery plans are based on species requirements and science and they are not weakened and compromised by the interests of resource extractive industries such as logging.
- Ensure the status of threatened species is determined by scientific experts not politicians. We must listen to the science that underpins the status of threatened species and base the threatened status of species on what the science says. Scientific experts are best placed to decide on the status of threatened species, not politicians who can be influenced by industry groups.

- Support the protection of Australia's forest dependent threatened species by supporting proposal to expand protected areas and safe guard a future for critical habitats. I call on you to officially support the Great Forest National Park proposal that seeks to protect forests in the Central Highlands of Victoria and the East Gippsland Emerald Link proposal that to link existing protected areas in the state far east and establish a continuous network of protected forests from the Australian alps the to the East Gippsland coast; and support new forest management including for the Great Koala Park and Great Southern Forest proposals in NSW.

As the new Environment Minister, you have a great opportunity to show leadership and act to secure a future for our forest dependant threatened species. I call on you to do all in your powers to act in the best interests for our threatened species and forest ecosystems.

Yours sincerely,
Heather Kenway