

Dear EPBC review Secretariat, thanks for the opportunity to comment on the EPBC process as it relates to the protection of listed threatened species.

For many years I have submitted comments on referrals listed on the EPBC website. Almost all of my submissions concern referrals that impact on the habitat of the Growling Grass Frog *Litoria raniformis* in the middle sections of the Merri Creek and surrounding areas. This area is located on the northern fringes of outer suburban Melbourne. My own research, supported by numerous published reports consistently confirms a remnant population of *L. raniformis* persisting in this area.

Over the last ten years, broadscale destruction of this species habitat (along the Merri Creek) has been continuing with the approval of the EPBC process. My experience is that the EPBC referral process allows habitat destruction of a listed threatened species, as long as supporting documentation is submitted as an EPBC referral. It appears that the main beneficiaries of the EPBC referral process are the consultants who readily write what they are told to in support of seeking approval for an EPBC referral. The words of these paid mouth pieces with their opinion-for-sale are accepted by the EPBC process, seemingly without independent review.

I have many documented examples of consultants reports attached to EPBC referrals that are inaccurate, poorly researched, biased and deliberately omit relevant information. Why does the EPBC referral process take the word of these cheque-book consultants whose only agenda is to seek approval for an EPBC referral? I was mistakenly under the impression the EPBC referral process was designed to protect the habitat or population of listed threatened species. This process has provided a cash cow for the consultants and does little for the threatened species.

A few examples of errors in consultants' reports attached to EPBC referrals include searching for frogs during a prolonged drought, finding none and concluding the species is no longer present. Searching for *L. raniformis* at the wrong time of year (when the species is inactive) and deciding they are not to be found in the study area. Failing to find any individual *L. raniformis* during field surveys in locations where I have found many. Using the opinions of credible scientists without permission and out of context. Omitting relevant information that may hinder the approval of an EPBC referral. There are many more examples and I can prove\support every claim I have made.

Included below is a list of some of the EPBC referrals that relate to my comments (appendix A).

Some examples of *L. raniformis* habitat destruction (along the middle sections of the Merri Creek) with the approval of the EPBC referral process include;

- The trenching of a gas pipeline across the one of the very last natural, ephemeral wetlands along the Merri Creek, known to contain vast numbers of frogs during 'wet' conditions.
- Isolating and fragmenting known *L. raniformis* populations by constructing roads between population sites.
- The drainage and filling of old quarry holes known to have *L. raniformis* present.
- The building of factories\industrial estates in areas where this species lives.
- The building of new suburbs in areas where this species lives.

Of most concern is the complete failure of the EPBC process to secure land for the purpose of the conservation of this species.

I never receive feedback from my comments about EPBC referrals and usually have to request confirmation that my comments have been received. The only response I have ever received is a pro-forma letter stating the referral is not a controlled action or rarely the referral is to be a controlled action, whatever that means.

The EPBC review process needs to recognise the current process is biased towards approving referrals, at the expense of protecting listed threatened species. The only real beneficiaries of the EPBC referral process are the consultants.

The EPBC referral process is also useful for documenting the biodiversity catastrophe currently underway in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Casey

Appendix A.

Reference Number	Title of referral	Date received
2008/4614	<u>Melbourne Water Corporation/Water management and use/south of Cooper St, Epping, Melbourne/VIC/Edgars Creek Drainage Enhancement</u>	26 Nov 2008
2008/4597	<u>Yarra Valley Water/Waste management (sewerage)/Cooper Street, Epping/VIC/Geotechnical Drilling Research for the Sewer Alignment for the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Markets</u>	20 Nov 2008
2008/4013	<u>Edgars St Pty Ltd/Commercial development/300 & 320 Cooper St Epping Melbourne/VIC/Commercial and industrial subdivision</u>	13 Feb 2008
2007/3755	<u>Department of Primary Industries/Commercial development/Cooper St, Epping, 17km north of Melbourne/VIC/Construction and operation of the Melbourne Wholesale Market</u>	09 Oct 2007
2007/3524	<u>VicUrban/Residential development/Epping North/VIC/Aurora, Residential Subdivision, Epping North</u>	03 Jul 2007
2005/2373	<u>Department of Human Services/Urban and commercial redevelopment/Cooper Street/Epping/VIC/Car Park development for the Northern Hospital</u>	31 Oct 2005
2003/1135	<u>Vic Roads/Land transport/Melbourne/VIC/Construction of the Edgars Road Extension, from Childs Road, Lalor to Cooper Street, Epping</u>	30 Jul 2003
2001/292	<u>VicRoads/Land Transport Infrastructure/Epping/VIC/Upgrade of Cooper Street, Epping</u>	18 May 2001
2001/275	<u>GPU GasNet Pty Ltd/Energy and Infrastructure (incl. Pipelines)/Somerton/VIC/Somerton Natural Gas Pipeline</u>	07 May 2001
2008/4608	<u>Yarra Valley Water/Waste management (sewerage)/Craigieburn, adjacent to the Craigieburn Bypass/VIC/Pipeline to link Craigieburn Sewerage Treatment Plant to new Aurora recycled sewerage treatment plant</u>	24 Nov 2008
2008/4161	<u>Stockland Highlands Pty Ltd/Residential development/25km north of Melbourne/VIC/Residential Development Craigieburn</u>	15 Apr 2008
2008/4150	<u>Goodman Property Services (Aust) Pty Ltd/Commercial development/700 Hume Highway, Craigieburn/VIC/Proposed Amaroo Business Park, Industrial & Commercial Development</u>	08 Apr 2008
2008/4125	<u>Stockland Highlands/Residential development/Craigieburn 25km north of Melbourne/VIC/Malcolm Creek Bridge and Highlands Residential Development (Areas 5a and C)</u>	26 Mar 2008

[2006/3057 Delfin Craigieburn Pty Ltd/Residential development/Craigieburn/VIC/Fairways North residential development](#) 14 Sep 2006

[2005/2157 Delfin Craigieburn Pty Ltd/Urban and commercial new development/Craigieburn/VIC/Parkview Village 156 Lot Residential Development & Translocation of Dianella amoena](#) 01 Jun 2005

[2004/1508 Department of Infrastructure/Land transport/Craigieburn/VIC/Craigieburn Rail Project](#) 10 May 2004

[2004/1505 Yarra Valley Water Limited/Waste management/Craigieburn/VIC/Cessation or Reduction of Flows from Sewage Treatment Plant](#) 06 May 2004

[2004/1503 Yarra Valley Water Limited/Waste management/Craigieburn/VIC/Construction of sewerage pipeline from Craigieburn Sewage Treatment Plant to Melbourne metropolitan sewerage system](#) 06 May 2004

[2002/601 Yarra Valley Water Limited/Waste management/Craigieburn/VIC/Craigieburn Sewage Treatment Plant Decommission](#) 06 Mar 2002

[2008/4315 Yarra Valley Water Ltd/Waste management \(sewerage\)/Horne Street Shaft site and Freeway Shaft Site Campbellfield/VIC/Sewerage Tunnel and Shafts Upgrade](#) 04 Jul 2008

[2005/2482 Banco Group of Companies/Urban and commercial new development/Campbellfield/VIC/Stage 15B Barry Road industrial subdivision](#) 12 Dec 2005