

To The Honourable Niall Blair,

Palm Oil. It's used in many things, from the shampoo you use to wash your hair, or the food you give to your dog. But no matter what it's used in, it's usually been harvested at the expense of many different animals, like orangutans, tigers, and elephants. This is because an unsettling amount of rainforests around the world have been cut down and burned to make room for palm oil plantations.

Palm oil is harvested from the fruit that grows on palm trees. Palm oil is found in most of the products that we use, and in a lot of these products, it's labelled incorrectly. This means that consumers don't know if the product that they're using has made thousands of animals vulnerable, or if it has helped to contribute to tons of CO2 having been released into the atmosphere.

Deforestation is having a huge impact on the environment, leaving whole species of animals vulnerable and contributing to global warming. One of the leading causes of deforestation is the need for palm oil, and rainforests the size of 300 soccer fields are being cut down every hour for palm oil plantations. Palm trees need a rainforest climate to grow. The largest, most valuable trees are cut down, and the rest of the forest is burned, which causes massive CO2 emissions to be released into the atmosphere. We then don't have enough trees to absorb this CO2, as we are cutting them down at an astonishing rate. This also leaves lots of animals (including orangutans) without a home, putting them at risk.

90% of the world's palm oil comes from Malaysia, which has large rainforests teeming with life. But to keep up with the palm oil demands, so many of these beautiful forests have been cut down, leaving hundreds of thousands of animals without a home. One of the main victims of this mass deforestation are orangutans. They depend on the rainforests for basic necessities, like food and shelter. The manufacturing of palm oil causes many of these beautiful creatures to die. Orangutans are at risk of becoming extinct, along with other animals like tigers and elephants.

But there is one small thing we can do to help. Palm oil is often labelled incorrectly on packaging, so consumers are unaware if the product that they're using was produced sustainably. It's very hard to avoid palm oil all together. But Australians should have the basic right to know what's in the product that they're using. Something as simple as labelling palm oil clearly can help with this massive problem.

Regards,
Chelsea