

Dear Niall Blair,

I am very sorry to inform you that you will no longer have a home as of the 7th of August, 2018. A new place to live will not be arranged for you, and you will not receive any compensation for being left to die. We will simply leave you with the slim chance that an unfunded, non profit organisation will arrive to help you before you are abused, killed by starvation, or are hit by passing traffic. I realise that we should not be able to take away the place you love and feel safe in, but we believe that, due to the fact that we are making money by using your land, and you are not, we have the right to.

This might seem like a bad enough letter for you to receive, but if you were an animal living in Africa, Asia, South America or North America, you wouldn't even get a warning. You would just wake up one day to a terrifying machine or blazing fire destroying your home. You might try to find a new habitat, but none offer the resources that you would need in order to survive.

Food manufacturers are currently allowed to label the palm oil in their products as 'vegetable oil', leaving consumers completely unaware that they are contributing to the deaths of over 1000 orangutans every year. The fact that these animals are brushed aside like the forests where they once lived is just rubbing salt into the wound. So why would you let companies get away with this? Why, if you have the power and the authority to change things, are you not helping these vulnerable and defenceless creatures, when they have nowhere to go? 10% of your shopping trolley will contain palm oil. But you don't have a choice in what is contained in the products you buy, because it's disguised as something else entirely. Consumer research shows that 95% of Australians support mandatory labelling of palm oil. As the main consumers of these products, don't we deserve the knowledge needed to change our food choices so that these innocent animals live their lives as they are supposed to?

Besides from destroying animals' homes, palm oil also consists of 50% saturated fats, the second highest percentage out of all oils. Obesity is a big issue in Australia, and the government has spoken numerous times about preventing the amount of obesity in Australia from rising. Many people trying to make healthier food choices maybe being tricked into consuming palm oil, but although this could be changed with just a few words, businesses still get away with not clearly labelling palm oil as an ingredient. The government has also spoken out about obesity in children, and according to a survey in 2014-15 run by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, one in four Australian children aged 2-17 were either overweight or obese. Palm oil is in many products commonly consumed by children, including ice-cream, pizza dough, chocolate, and biscuits. So tell me, if the government is so concerned about obesity in Australia, then why do you constantly prevent people from making healthy decisions by not labelling palm oil on packages?

When tropical forests are cleared to make way for oil palm plantations, carbon is released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, the gas that is the leading cause of global warming; tropical deforestation accounts for about 10 percent of total global warming emissions. This is because tropical forests store large amounts of carbon. Indonesia was the world's seventh-largest emitter of global warming pollution in 2009, and

deforestation accounted for about 30 percent of these emissions. In fact, for that same year Indonesia was ranked second (behind Brazil) in the amount of global warming pollution it produced because of Deforestation. Emissions due just to oil palm cultivation in Indonesia accounted for an estimated 2 to 9 percent of all tropical land use emissions from 2000 to 2010. Because global demand for palm oil is anticipated to continue rising, Southeast Asian, African, and Latin American forests, as well as other tropical ecosystems that store large amounts of carbon, are all at risk for more plantations being made. Indonesia has already announced plans to double its palm oil production by 2020, and both Indonesia and Malaysia aim to dedicate millions of tons of palm oil to producing biofuels. While the use of fuels made from vegetable oils is growing rapidly as an alternative to fossil fuels, some countries, including the United States, have restricted or excluded palm oil-based biofuels because of concerns about environmental impact. It is ridiculous to constantly speak about Australia helping to improve climate change and then to not even let consumers know they are supporting businesses who contribute to it.

Labelling palm oil will put more pressure on businesses to locate sustainably grown palm oil, and this will not only save the animals suffering from their habitat being cruelly destroyed, but it will also benefit Australian citizens, including yourself. We as a nation need to strive for a more sustainable Australia, and this is a vital step in doing that.

From Emma