

Dear Madam/ Sir

I am excited to be able to provide a submission to this 'Extinction Inquiry'. While I follow the news and current events on a daily basis, I've not made a submission of this kind before. I thank the Parliament of Victoria for making this opportunity available.

I write because of the interest my family and extended family have with 'nature'. I personally come from a family farm in NSW and I grew up with a strong appreciation of nature and the natural world. At my stage of life (recently retired) one of my great pleasures is to visit National Parks and to spend time in our forests. With my family, I've often enjoyed visiting the beaches and forests around Apollo Bay, including walking the Great Ocean Road Walking Track. We had friends visit from Spain a few years ago and I was struck by how very precious our native animals are, when I saw their excitement and enthusiasm for discovering koalas in the bush and spotting kangaroos and wallabies. We spent a wonderful short week with them in the Great Otways National Park. My husband and I recently visited outback Victoria and NSW and the Flinders Ranges and will plan further camping trips around Victoria. We were planning such a trip to the Grampians when Covid 19 struck. I hope it's not too long before we can set off!

I am sending this submission because I am very concerned about the logging which is going on in Victorian native forests. I knew of the situation in general, but became much more informed as a result of the Yarra Valley Writer's Festival recently. The keynote address, from scientist David Lindenmayer made me aware how extremely critical it is for logging of native forests to stop immediately. His presentation showed very clearly that historical and contemporary logging of forests has had profound effects on the severity and frequency of bushfires.

My understanding is that we must stop logging of native forests immediately, near human settlements. We also need to restore previously logged forests to build resilience to future fire events. Of course, we must protect remaining undisturbed or lightly disturbed area as they are so important for many species, including animals and birds. It is important that forest industries are able to continue, but they must limit impacts on the native forest estate. The forest industry needs to be re-structured so that wood production is focused on tree plantations.

Finally, I want to say I feel very strongly that intact forests are critical, not just in terms of fire resilience, but also for their role in mitigating climate change. It goes without saying that personal enjoyment of National Parks is deeply part of our way of life in Victoria. Protection of the forests will also help to revitalise local rural communities affected by loss of tourism through Covid 19. I would like to see job creation schemes such as the NSW 'Save our Species' scheme. Schemes such as this can have a kind of 'snowball' effect, encouraging national and international tourism, and contributing to a strengthening of the Victorian economy in a fair, inclusive manner which also benefits our wonderful natural environment.