

Jean Christie

SUBMISSION CONCERNING PREVENTION OF EXTINCTION OF SPECIES

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to ask the Parliamentary Inquiry to seriously consider the urgent need to protect species of all kinds in Victoria, so as to avoid extinction and thus permanent damage to our eco-systems.

I live in Melbourne, but my favourite place in Victoria is the Bellarine Peninsula, west of Melbourne, where my extended family has gone on holiday for many years. I love walking along the beautiful beaches, and through the nearby forests. There is an orange-red species of eucalypt there, which I have not seen elsewhere in Victoria.

However, I am sad to note that I live in Australia's most cleared state, with two thirds of its area having been cleared of native trees, shrubs and plants. Over one hundred animals, birds, plants, fish, and insects are on the brink of extinction, and more than half of these live in forests that are still being logged. This bad situation has been exacerbated by our recent appalling bushfire season, in which 1.4 million hectares burned, in Victoria alone.

However, there is still time to restore habitat, and thus wildlife. Victoria is plagued by invasive animals such as foxes and deer, as well as invasive weeds. A program to clear our waterways, farms and national parks of weeds would create thousands of jobs, and the invasive animal species could be humanely culled. Trees and vegetation could be replanted in both rural and metropolitan areas, and landowners encouraged to plant native vegetation on their land.

Sadly, Victoria spends little on species recovery work, and lacks a program similar to the 'Save Our Species' program in New South Wales. (The latter has committed \$100 million to identifying and addressing risks to species). Victoria needs to follow suit.

Tragically, the destruction of habitat and the damaging use of fossil fuels continue. As a result, we are getting worse heat waves, fires, and floods, which of course have further impact on our native species. Furthermore, unnecessary development, such as the proposed gas terminal in Westernport Bay, must cease. And finally, our weak laws for the protection of native wildlife, forests, and grasslands must be significantly strengthened, so that those responsible for any destruction face consequences.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to express my concern for the environment and native species of Victoria, as well as my hope that these issues will be addressed.

I give my permission for my submission to be made public.

Yours sincerely,

JEAN M. CHRISTIE