

From: Polly Semous [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2020 10:49 AM
To: ecosystems
Subject: WHAM ecosystems, Golden Sun Moth, Cultural trees, remnant vegetation..

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Dear Members of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Extinction,

I grew up in WA and QLD, but was lucky enough to come to Victoria for a ski trip as a teenager, then to visit a friend in Ararat and then to Melbourne for a semester to study at La Trobe. Three visits to this beautiful state that I will always remember. I loved Melbourne so much, the intelligence of the people, the gorgeous buildings, the intelligence of using trams and the people - it all delighted me - if anyone ever asks my favourite city in Australia it is always Melbourne. Visiting Ararat area I fell in love with the gorgeous landscape and the sacred trees. I was horrified when some years ago a friend from Melbourne alerted me to the highway project threatening these incredible treasures and I was shocked that the state I always think of as our intellectual heartland, home to the only city I really loved, and to amazing landcare and restoration projects and protections... could continue to make mistake after mistake and fail to find an alternative.

The ill considered road redevelopment in the Western Highway area - the beautiful ancient trees that are cultural cathedrals for the Djab Wurrung including birthing trees, cooking trees and the gorgeous remnant vegetation that supports the precious populations of powerful owls and the endangered Golden Sun Moth.

Such a wasteful and belligerently bureaucratic development proposal. I can understand how it began, lines on a map, some calculations that did not take into account the value of the ancient trees and the preciousness of the remnant vegetation and the habitat and the cultural values. That's understandable. What's infuriating and deeply distressing is that after that stage, once all the evidence was revealed, the initial proposal continued like a brutal juggernaut of foolishness and pride and refusal to reconsider the wisdom of the highway realignment. I beg the parliamentary inquiry to visit the area. I've only visited twice and both visits stand in my memory forever for the trees, the landscape... and now I realise also how precious this country is to the First people who are its custodians.

Please do all you can to prevent yet another pointless wasteful destruction and the likely extinction of the Golden Sun Moth.

I beg you to reconsider this proposal, commit to preserving the precious cultural and ecological heritage and protecting the endangered species.

Thank you.

Polly Valentine,
[REDACTED]