

**From:** Bonnie Gelman <campaigns@good.do>  
**Sent:** Saturday, 15 August 2020 2:52 PM  
**To:** ecosystems  
**Subject:** Submission into the Inquiry into Ecosystems Decline in Victoria

**Categories:** Submissions

Dear committee,

I hope our submission to the Inquiry into Ecosystems Decline in Victoria is read and considered, and that you as committee members recognise that our ecosystems have been in decline for such a long time that 'refreshing and modernising' is not an option - our nature protection laws need to be made climate change ready and supported by regulations and funding for enforcement officers.

I am 57 years old and I have seen, in my lifetime so far, a deterioration of natural aspects of our public nature reserves. Land clearing, urban expansion, over extraction of natural resources such as water and timber have contributed. The introduction of invasive species - such as Sallow Wattle in the Grampians, feral deer, and feral cats have also not been dealt with sufficiently..

We ask that the Inquiry into ecosystems decline in Victoria take into account the following reforms to help ensure that we make the most of this opportunity:

1. Resource and implement the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act is at the core of Victoria's biodiversity conservation legislation. Reforms made last year to the Act require proper implementation if the existence of our flora and fauna is to be guaranteed into the future.
2. Ensure our nature protection laws are climate ready. Recent bushfires demonstrated the catastrophic impact that changing climate causing events can have on our natural places and wildlife within. Climate change is presenting a massive challenge to Victorian ecosystems and climate adaption must be a part of our legal frameworks.
3. Improve compliance and enforcement with our environmental laws. We were pleased to see a significant change last year following a damning review of timber harvesting regulation in Victoria, with the government establishing the Office of Conservation the Regulator. This move was recognition that the implementation and enforcement of our nature protection laws needed to be improved. We ask for an independent conservation regulator with a clear legislative foundation and all the legal powers needed to ensure Victoria's conservation laws are complied with.
4. Protect Victoria's precious wildlife. Victoria's Wildlife Act 1975 is out of date and no longer meets community expectations when it comes to protecting our precious wildlife. It should be reformed to make sure that it meets the

Victorian community's expectations for how our valued wildlife will be protected and preserved for future generations.

5. Some new developments are harmful to ecosystems within and around the boundaries. We are worried that our current Victorian laws are not fit for purpose if Federal laws are devolved to State environmental laws - Victoria's planning laws and environmental impact assessment laws need to be brought up to date to make sure that infrastructure projects properly account for their impacts on Victoria's biodiversity before responsibilities are handed over.

6. Removing key drivers of ecosystem decline such as native forest logging, unsustainable use of water resources, and the impact of invasive species will help address ecosystem decline. Ending native forest logging sooner rather than later, more sustainable water resource management, and new fit for purpose invasive species management legislation are needed to keep ecosystems intact and those adversely impacted, be resored.

7. Increase ecosystem restoration as nature protection laws should be augmented by laws which guide and encourage the restoration of Victoria's ecosystems. Our changing climate has detrimentally impacted on Victorian flora and fauna; on public land and private land our land management must be subject to appropriate obligations to ensure that ecological processes and natural assets are there for future generations to enjoy.

My son and I ask that you recognise and act on improving and strengthening the laws which protect our natural assets. We ask that you consider the state of our ecosystems at the time of Victoria's colonisation and act for all of us to halt further decline of Victoria's natural places on behalf of all of us.

We thank you for considering our submission, typed on the land of the the people of Yalukit Wilum of the Boon Wurrung Country that makes up the Greater Kulin Nation, traditional owners of lands in our vicinity.

From,

Bonnie Gelman and Felix Gelman White

[REDACTED], Australia

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