

From: 
To: [ecosystems](#)
Subject: A submission to the Extinction Inquiry
Date: Monday, 11 May 2020 12:15:07 AM

Dear Minister,

This submission can be made public.

Here are some facts about the state of Victoria's environment:

- Victoria is the most cleared state in Australia - 66% of our land has been cleared of native trees, shrubs and plants - the habitat that supports our native wildlife
- Over 700 native plants, animals, insects and beautiful ecosystems are under threat, with this number growing every day
- 120 Victorian animals, birds, plants, insects and fish are now at the brink of extinction
- More than 70 threatened species make their home in forests that are still being logged

Tragically, this summer's fires have dramatically worsened the outlook for the places and creatures that make Victoria such an amazing place. The scale, severity and destruction of these fires was unprecedented.

The fires:

- Burned 1.4 million hectares, just in Victoria
- Destroyed more than 50% of the habitat for 185 rare and threatened Victorian animals, plants and other creatures
- Pushed already critically endangered species like the greater glider, smoky mouse, mountain ash eucalyptus and many others perilously close to extinction

Some solutions I'd like implemented include:

a) A huge program of weed and invasive species eradication

Victoria is overrun by weeds and invasive animals, which kill and out-compete our native plants and wildlife. It's a big job to manage them, but it's critical for restoring habitat. We could create thousands of jobs clearing weeds out of rivers, creeks, farmland and national parks, and humanely managing introduced animals like cats, deer, rabbits and foxes.

b) A tree-planting workforce to restore habitat

67% of Victoria's trees, mangroves, shrubs, and other plants have been cleared since colonisation. Much of what's left is in poor health. We could create thousands of jobs in both the city and the country, replanting trees and vegetation in our parks, streets, rivers and creeks right across our state, but especially in bushfire-affected areas. We could also help landowners plant native vegetation on their land.

c) A dedicated program for reviving species facing extinction

The work of rescuing Victoria's more than 120 species at risk of extinction deserves and needs a dedicated program of funding. NSW has committed \$100 million to a 'Save Our Species' program, which systematically identifies risks to species and goes about addressing them. It also includes action like breeding programs so healthy populations of animals, birds and plants can be restored. Victoria has nothing like this program and

spends almost no money on this type of dedicated species recovery work. We also spend very little money on research for our scientists to study new solutions to the extinction crisis. It's time that changed.

d) An end to habitat destruction and strengthened nature laws

We cannot hope to stop extinction unless we stop the destructive activities that are driving it. We need to:

- End native forest logging and transition to a plantation based timber industry
- Phase out coal and gas burning, which is making the climate crisis worse and driving devastating extreme events like heat waves, fires and floods
- Stop destructive and unnecessary development like the Western Highway Duplication and the proposed Westernport gas ship terminal which continue to bit-by-bit erode the health of Victoria's environment for corporate profits.
- Change the laws that allow wildlife to be killed, and grasslands and other habitat to be cleared, with little to no ramifications.

Yours sincerely,

Marco Setiawan

