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From: Hilary Lovibond [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2020 5:37 PM
To: ecosystems
Cc: office@ellensandell.com
Subject: Submission to the Victorian Extinction Enquiry - confidential

Categories: Submissions

I am making this submission as an ordinary member of the community with no special expertise in ecology, natural history, environmental studies or any of the fields which might qualify someone to provide expert input to this enquiry. Despite this lack I am moved to make a submission because the ongoing endangerment and extinction of species in Victoria and the observable environmental damage which is causing much of it *must* matter to every person living in Victoria.

Without the alpine meadows and snow gums in the high country, without the hard, dry forests of the Box Ironbark country, without the Ramsar listed wetlands of the Bellarine Peninsula, without the old-growth forests of East Gippsland - indeed, without the immense diversity of ecosystems that exist within this relatively small state – we would not be Victoria. Every plant, animal, bird and insect pushed towards or into extinction diminishes every Victorian and diminishes the state.

I have lived, worked and walked extensively in the environments I mention above. Their plants, animals, birds and insects are under threat – from climate change, drought and fire, from invasive species, feral animals, inappropriate “development” and the general encroachment of human activity. From the dispiriting figures which indicate that since colonisation, 66% of the land in Victoria has been cleared of native vegetation and over 700 native plants, animal, insects and ecosystems are currently under threat, I would suggest that almost every one of the distinctive and special environments in Victoria is also at risk.

Without a healthy, diverse natural environment, we are poorer as a community. We have before us a unique opportunity to stop, assess what we are doing and decide to do things differently. One of the most compelling and positive themes to emerge from the countless thousands of words already written about the gruelling uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the chance it presents to reset, move away from practices that put “the economy” above all else, to recognise that we have only one planet and only one shot at making sure its ecosystems remain healthy and diverse.

Specifically, the Victorian government could create thousands of jobs in areas such as weed and invasive species eradication and tree planting to the immense benefit of the environment *and* those able to take up this employment. This would be a significant step towards helping to restore, maintain and protect the ecosystems on which our threatened species rely – on which must all rely – and at the same time contribute to the livelihoods and wellbeing of the Victorians involved.

I urge the Victorian parliament to take responsibility for stopping extinction in Victoria, and the Victorian Government to recognise the importance of and adequately fund a dedicated program for reviving species facing extinction and prioritise stopping the destructive activities that drive it.

Hilary Lovibond

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