

From: Trent Rebeiro <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2020 9:24 PM
To: ecosystems
Subject: Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into biodiversity and ecosystem decline in Victoria.

Having graduated from a Science degree majoring in Wildlife & Conservation Biology, I am extremely conscious of the delicate interconnectedness intrinsic of diverse ecosystem processes and the species they are comprised of, and especially how they can be negatively affected by human activities as well as having the potential to positively enhance human communities. The current extinction crisis, of which humanity is the primary cause for, is occurring faster than the asteroid impact that decimated the dinosaurs. The future of the planet lies firmly in our hands, and the longer we wait to take bold and necessary action, the greater and more accelerated the negative effects from ecosystems compromised by species loss will be.

The effect of humanity's actions (forcing and accelerating climate change via the use of fossil fuels for energy, deforestation, increased urbanisation reducing species mobility, sustained pollution, the loss of nutrients from soil due to unsustainable agricultural practices – the list goes on forever) on the degradation of the environment has been well documented in scientific literature, our contribution to the extinction of species (and thus the loss of the ecosystem services they provide) is clear. The benefits of healthy and robust ecosystems have also been widely investigated, from the reliance agriculture has on remnant ecosystems and native pollinators, thermoregulatory and water retentive capabilities of forests, to carbon sequestration in plants, fungi and soil organisms.

Also, I have witnessed the importance of the steps local government are taking to reduce carbon emissions and protecting and enhancing natural ecosystems. It's time that these priorities were considered with greater importance by the State government. We need to start recognising the ecosystem services generated by the symbiotic relationships between native species for the positive externalities that they are, providing far-reaching direct and indirect benefits to human communities across the state, the country, and the planet.

My personal suggestions for how to tackle the current extinction and ecological degradation crisis revolves around increasing recognition of the importance of the social, economic and health benefits provided by the ecosystem services native wildlife produces. By enshrining intrinsic worth in these ecosystem services, it becomes much easier to protect them. Good economic policy dictates that positive externalities be sustained, bad economic policy prioritises unsustainable practices (such as logging, wasteful agriculture, rampant pollution). Investment in ecosystem services needs to be increased (and due to their inherent economic value would not be perceived as a cost in the long run), and this funding can be redirected from unnecessary subsidies currently funding negative

externality generating operations such as logging and mining (as these incur an overarching cost on the economy). The need to preserve natural ecosystems should also be incorporated in planning legislation

, ensuring that our cities and suburbs continue to grow sustainably and intelligently.

Therefore, I propose that ecosystems should be given tangible economic value – this will protect them as the assets that they are for the state.

I look forward to seeing strong action to protect and restore Victoria's environment as a result of the work of this committee.

I am happy for my submission to be made public.

Yours sincerely,

Trent Rebeiro

[Redacted signature]

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