

Dear committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Ecosystems Decline in Victoria.

We lived through Black Saturday. As terrible as that experience was, we consoled ourselves with the thought that it would surely trigger some constructive thinking about how economic growth and environmental growth needs could be better balanced.

Alas, those hopes haven't come to much.

Now, as we come to grips with the economic fallout from COVID-19, is a perfect time for governments to spend public money and create jobs by looking after people and the environment.

For example, projects could be initiated to:

- clear the weeds out of rivers, creeks, farmland and national parks;
- humanely manage introduced animals like cats, deer, rabbits and foxes;
- replant trees and vegetation in our parks, streets, rivers and creeks right across our state, especially in bushfire-affected areas;
- initiate a dedicated program for reviving species facing extinction, like that in NSW;
- fund local scientists to study new solutions to the extinction crisis;
- 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 proposed Westernport gas ship terminal; and
- change the laws that allow wildlife to be killed, and grasslands and other habitat to be cleared, with few or no ramifications.

All these suggestions would not only result in improvements to environmental management but would also create or stabilise employment and/or build important skill sets.

Again, we cling to the hope that a progressive Victorian government will do the right thing, the progressive thing. Please, for the sake of our grandchildren and the planet, don't let us down.

Judy & Nick Jans