

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

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**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Impacts of native forest logging and land clearing as a key driver of biodiversity, threatened species and ecosystem decline.

The catastrophic impacts of the 2019/2020 bushfires which wiped out over 1 billion native animals, and over 70% of forests in East Gippsland.

No consent from Traditional Owners in regards to logging, no consideration of the cultural and spiritual significance of forests and wildlife to First Nations Peoples, no consideration or acknowledgement of the impacts of environmental degradation on First Nations Peoples.

The impacts of climate change on threatened species, and the strong links between climate change and bushfires, which poses a severe threat to the continued survival of threatened species and ecosystems.

Inadequate protections for threatened species and their habitat.

Weak and ineffective state and federal environmental regulation.

Lack of funding for National Parks, restoration projects, weed and pest control

Recommendations/actions:

A rapid transition out of native forest logging to remove one of the key drivers of decline of threatened species in Victoria. Key areas of habitat must be identified and protected, as critical areas which threatened species rely on to survive are still under threat of logging.

Greater protections for threatened species against extractive industries such as logging, mining, development, and fossil-fuel projects. Climate change and bushfires also have significant and grave impacts on forests and wildlife.

Taking strong action on climate change has the potential to halt these impacts to climate change vulnerable threatened species.

Restoration of areas which have been heavily impacted by logging and other extractive industries, as well as areas impacted by the horrific 2019/2020 bushfires.

Clear processes and actions to recognise and address the impacts of ecosystem decline on First Nations peoples, and prioritisation of First Nations voices and involvement in management of country and traditional lands, returning custodianship to Traditional Owners.