

To whom this may concern

Please find my submission for the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria below. I would like my submission (except my contact details) to be made public.

I did not grow up in Victoria, but moved to Melbourne for work. In the 10 years that I've lived here, the National Parks in Victoria have taken a greater and greater importance in my life as I began to explore all the various trails in Victoria. Going for an extended bushwalk over multiple days has been one of my favourite ways to disconnect from daily stressors and reconnect with myself and nature.

Over this time, it has become more and more evident that our ecosystems are being slowly destroyed. Even before last year's devastating bushfires,

- 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

If we continue to let this happen, our children, let alone our children's children will no longer have the opportunity to experience all the wonders in our backyard.

Furthermore, without a strong and healthy ecosystem, our planet won't survive due to increased emissions and less vegetation to absorb our emissions; and without a healthy ecosystem, a strong economy will be meaningless. What is the point of making money if you can't enjoy it? What is the point of making money if we don't have food security or water security or clean air?

Humans are not separate from nature. We are all inter-related and dependent upon one another. We need to switch from an anthropocentric view to an ecocentric view. We cannot afford to continue along our current path of raping and plundering the earth for human benefit and infinite growth. We need to work with our environment to maintain harmony and balance. We need to remember that it is not our planet but rather, we are custodians of the planet for future generations.

I would like to see the Victorian government and all Australian governments to follow the recommendations of scientists, just as we have for the coronavirus pandemic.

This includes acknowledging the 10 existential risks that we are currently facing as listed by the [Commission for the Human Future](#).

This means committing to the principles of [doughnut economics](#) as written by Kate Raworth. [Amsterdam](#) has done this; we can as well!

It isn't just planting trees. We need to re-wild our environment and ensure that we reduce carbon emissions. We are going to need jobs after this pandemic is over. Create jobs for people to rehabilitate our home. 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.

Regards
David Lee

