

Dear Sir/Madam

I feel very strongly that care for the environment, for biodiversity in our soils, waterways, forests and all of the creatures large and small that depend on these "wild spaces" always takes a back seat to the myth of growth for growth's sake and the "economy". We live in a State where the value of our native land and its flora and fauna appears to have no value - so easily is it destroyed with a promise of off-sets etc. and housing developments encroaching closer and closer to wildlife habitat.

I despair that organisations such as Wildlife Victoria depend upon contributions from the public to conduct their business of care for injured wildlife on a 24/7 365 days a year basis.

I despair too, that what rules and regulations are in place to protect our forests and wildlife are now very out of date. They do not take into consideration the need to update due to the impact of climate change - (the effects of which we are all witnessing now). These laws and "regulations" have also been very poorly enforced with weak or no penalties - I hope this will change.

Across all levels of government Local, State and Federal - the ENVIRONMENT is usually an afterthought - whereas it should be the first priority in all considerations of development be they housing/industries/ roads and highways.

I fear that we are at the point of increased species extinction in Victoria. The 1970s "green wedges" and "wildlife corridors" seldom get mentioned now, instead huge old eucalypts are sacrificed to widen a highway - the cheapest way through mapped out rather than keeping clear of these ancient trees.

I would like this Parliamentary Inquiry to try to stop such destruction of habitat that leads to species extinction, to consider the environment for the priceless gem that it is and the need to preserve it. If that means less industry and less population in Victoria in the long run - then I vote for that exactly. Sustainability takes priority over a "manufactured" need for continued growth.

I hope to see the end of these destructive activities and due consideration be given to the good environmental outcomes that can be achieved for Victoria if :

- An end to native forest logging and immediate 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 Westport 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.
- No offshore oil and gas exploration in Victorian Coastal waters/Bass Strait
- Extend the moratorium on CSG and Natural Gas exploration on-shore in Victoria

Susan Meyer

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