

Dear committee,

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

The environment in Victoria has been in decline for decades. Droughts, bushfires, land clearing, over use of limited water supplies, timber cutting, urban sprawl, and introduced species are all playing a significant part in this.

There are no safe places for threatened species to withdraw to, so they must fight every battle were it is. Once a species is extinct it is gone forever and we may not know how it fits into the ecosystem. Things that break will stay broken.

Strong environmental laws and properly funded government enforcement are needed.

A key part in protecting our environment is our environmental laws. They should be the foundation for addressing ecosystem decline in the state.

This inquiry should consider:

1. Resourcing and implementing the requirements of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.
2. Making sure our nature protection laws are adequate for the expected changes to Victoria's climate.
3. Ensuring compliance with and enforcement of our environmental laws. I am dismayed to hear how government entities (such as Forests Victoria) have ignored their obligations to protect threatened species.
4. Reviewing Victoria's Wildlife Act 1975 to ensure that it meets community expectations to protect our wildlife.
5. Preventing the harmful impacts of new development. The federal EPBC is not doing its job and state legislation is not up to it either.
6. Removing key drivers of ecosystem decline such as native forest logging, unsustainable use of water resources, and the impact of invasive species. So much of the native forests have been lost already and the recent bushfires have only made the situation more dire.
7. It is not enough to stop doing the bad things. We also need to undo the harm and restore some of the damage already done on public and private land.

Please consider my thoughts.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Flanagan

