

Submission to the Victorian Government Extinction Inquiry.
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From:

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My submission may be made public.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect upon this important and worrying topic.

The number of species under threat of extinction is of great concern. Living in Healesville I am particularly aware of the threat to the Leadbeater possum and the Greater Glider but of course they are but two in the approximately 170 species under threat.

Climate change with its associated extreme weather events including bush fires and storms, along with overall temperature increases, is the backdrop for these potential extinctions.

The particular threatened species are, to mix metaphors, “the canary in the coal mine” or “the tip of the iceberg”. They indicate that in many instances the whole ecosystems are under threat. This is true in this area with the mountain ash forests that with logging, bush fires and temperature increases are at risk. The large areas of former forest that are now a wasteland with ineffective regeneration, lack of species diversity and weed infestation are part of this problem. Mountain ash forests have grown in a narrow band of conditions. Mature trees display a tolerance for changing temperature but it is by no means certain that with higher temperatures, even under best practice, that these forests will be able to be regenerated. Preserving what we have is of great importance. To see these trees going to produce wood chip and paper is a great dereliction of responsibility by our government.

So what can be done?

Actions at both an overall and individual level are important.

Individually the government can build on the good work it has been doing by facilitating and encouraging the use of renewable energy. I am a 75 year old woman and I have recently purchased an all electric car. It is one of the cheaper ones available but still has almost 500 km range. I have roof top solar with battery storage. Almost all the time I can charge the car from my solar. I think it is wonderful! With the proliferation of roof top solar this has to become an option for many people especially if the government encourages the uptake of EV's with active support that would soon bring the high capital cost down. Victoria: the EV state. How good would that be!

Other areas that the government has a significant role to play include being more pro-active in protecting the habitat of endangered species. The move to phasing out native timber logging is a step in the right direction but it is too little, too late for some areas such as the mountain ash forests. The protection requires a more nuanced approach. Likewise there is a definite government role in providing funding and legislation to enable tackling feral animals and plants. In this area deer are a major problem.

I am sure the scientists and ecologists will provide the hard data that you need to really understand the threat of extinctions in our state.

I look forward to a government response that is a positive step in this challenging journey.

Margaret Blair