

From: Patrick Connor <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Tuesday, 25 August 2020 6:07 PM
To: ecosystems
Subject: Submission into the Inquiry into Ecosystems Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Dear Committee,

I have lived on the top ridge of the Great Divide south of Lyonville for nearly 40 years.

In that time I have noticed many changes to the local ecosystem, notably the loss of understorey species from weed infiltration and a dramatic loss of koalas from this area.

Koalas used to be common, with their calls being heard frequently and individuals being regular visitors around our garden.

This has all stopped - the last time I saw a koala in this location (which is in the middle of the Wombat State Forest) was at least 10 years ago.

My property has one of the main anabranches of the Loddon River emanating from a spring. This spring has had dramatically reduced flow in my time here, indicating both the reduction in rainfall and dropping of the water table by water extraction. This must be of concern as 5 major rivers start within a few kilometres of this property and the water is vital for both ecological and human needs.

I am a strong supporter of the VEAC recommendations to upgrade the status of the Wombat as a means to accomplishing better environmental outcomes and at least protect the area from further logging which historically has caused many of the current problems.

I consider that the existing legislation such as the FFG Act are under-resourced such that appropriate monitoring of this ecosystem decline has not been adequately undertaken. (I can't recall any local instance of prosecutions under this Act although I know of many breaches that have occurred).

With the Federal Government apparently looking to divest itself of responsibility for the EPBC Act, contrary to what Graeme Samuel has recommended in his interim report, it seems all the more important that state legislation is beefed up to cover for its existing weaknesses and also as it may be all the more important in the face of the Federal Governments abdication of responsibility to protecting the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to have my say in your deliberations

Yours faithfully,
Patrick Connor

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