

Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria , Environment Planning Council.

Further to my earlier submission to the Enquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria, this is a addition to support the proposal for the creation of a Victorian Public Land Use Commission as suggested by Jason Wood of Lining Investments Pty Ltd submission.

All rural stewardship has successfully been removed from conservation management in the Upper Yarra Valley, my home, as a result of a VEAC investigation and resulting designation of the Yellingbo Conservation Area under the National Parks Act 1975, followed then by the introduction of the The Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017. This legislation may be considered successful if it is judged on the propaganda produced by those in the business of environmentalism, but total removal of generational knowledge and voluntary custodianship has and will continue to have a negative conservation outcome. To put it in simple terms, the engagement/consultation process to implement the legislation and roll out of the above mentioned designation and Act, would be to say that they would not meet procedural fairness standards of a democratic process. They do meet political outcomes to satisfy emotive urban pressure groups. The outcome does not in any way address sustainable conservation needs when the affected area communities have been alienated and voluntary conservation responsibility removed.

Indigenous Australians lived within nature, as do the many current rural Australians, but in a changed social setting of 2020 with demands, expectations, aspirations and importantly a changed and changing natural environment. Now many new pressures that nature has no evolutionary defences from must be considered. Weeds, disease, feral animals, insects, ect. These changes are the daily challenges of rural Australians. Yet these changes will result in long standing generational knowledge and care being removed.

Weeds, disease, feral animals, insects, etc as ever increasing problem are magnified by 70% of our population removed from the reality of our natural environment. They have no practical experience by association with nature.

The indigenous model is as relevant today as it was before colonisation. How do the governing bodies plan to accommodate a practical natural responsibility as part of a cohesive involvement of the environment and nature on a population that is largely devoid of natural life association? It should certainly not be by removing rural stewardship. Nor is it by sole responsibility given to urban based claimants of indigenous heritage. Those closely connected with the environment and riparian waterways have a vested interest in keeping their 'backyard' cared for. They are aware on a monthly, weekly and daily basis what changes are occurring, when weeds are beginning to take over, when feral animals are plentiful and when other challenges arise. The environment cannot wait months for an inspection, and resulting paperwork to be sorted to provide an order for removal of a

problem (such as weed control), feral deer or even European wasps, for example, because by that time, the problem has become exponentially worse and the new seed bed (as it relates to weed infestation), breeding season of feral animals, and population explosion of wasps, is expeditiously worse. Unnaturally high fuel loads are presently ignored and mistaken as natural. Regardless of cultural ancestry, all stewards of the land are united in rebuttal of this fallacy.

Yet the answer is in our Australian cultural. That all Australians that live a life of integrity are of equal worth. Farming, forestry, fishing, mining, etc have evolved to have environmental responsibility, yet are totally removed from this responsibility by the politicisation of environmental management. Locally connected individuals, if allowed, have the experience and have the ability to economically enhance a respectful relationship as part of nurturing the natural environment. However, if this connection is removed, experience and the financial ability to have a respectful relationship is removed. To use with respect what nature requires and provides.

Our ANZAC's had fortitude to stand up for what was simply right - the fortitude to stand up and call out the emotive half-truths of many pressure groups. Will any Australian political party have the fortitude to once again stand up for what is simply right for a truly sustainable Australia? A sustainable Australia including the environment, with social integrity and economically, that allows a duty of care to all of the above, that at this point is not being met, but rather cast aside without due consideration of the ramifications of such decisions.

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