



From: POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>
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To: ecosystems
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Mr Gareth Rego



SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Environment and Planning Committee,

I am making a submission for the inquiry into Ecosystem Decline.

My name is Gareth Rego, a 50 year old Student Wellbeing Counsellor at Collingwood College. I am a New Zealander that has been living in Melbourne with my Australian wife for the past 23 years.

I grew up hiking with my family and have continued that tradition all over Australia with my wife and two children.

It has been an on-going pleasure to experience the enormous beauty and diversity of Australian wilderness with regular hikes and camping. Working in a school I am blessed with many opportunities to do this in the school holidays with my children in National Parks and wilderness areas such as the Cathedral Ranges, Lederberg Gorge locally and further such as Kakadu National Park in the NT.

When I am driving through Victoria to camp in National Parks, I also love to break up the journey with a side trip to an especially beautiful rock or clump of trees I might see during the journey often in or near State Forest. These diversions in recent years have made apparent the extent of deforestation occurring. Protection for National Parks is not enough; broader environmental protection is necessary for full enjoyment of Victoria and for saving the variety of plant and animal life spread across the whole of our state. It is extraordinary to me that instead of enhancing this nature Australia is systematically reducing it with no apparent heed to the long term implications of this. The very air we breathe and water we drink are being adversely affected by a policy of increased deforestation. Most developed countries see the myriad benefits of protecting the environment. This includes more tourist opportunities, protection of biodiversity and extinction rates. While one can understand a developing country feeling forced into deforestation for economic gain we are not in that situation.

More locally, I am a passionate cyclist that has always cycled to work from Ivanhoe to Collingwood every day regardless of weather. Over the years I have noticed a dramatic reduction in insects something very obvious as often

insect clouds would wash over me as I rode, something that does not occur with the regularity or intensity of numbers it did. This makes me think if insect loss is occurring in urban built up environments like Melbourne how much worse and devastating the effect of bio-diversity loss in Victoria overall must be.

I ask the Victorian State Government to please initiate the following:

Recommendations:

- a. Victoria cannot return to business as usual after the catastrophic 2019-2020 summer bushfires. The same laws and policies that have failed wildlife over decades and done little to address the climate crisis can't be relied on to help us recover from bushfires. An immediate cessation of logging in East Gippsland appears vital with the government's commitment to the 2030 Industry Transition brought forward.
- b. Further protection of our forests for all Victorians to enjoy could be made with the endorsement of the Great Forest National Park proposal.
- c. Victoria's biodiversity needs more protection with Action statements (plans for recovery) for all threatened native plants and wildlife.
- d. Create an independent Environment Protection Agency to act as watch-dog over government, and ensure our laws are properly enforced.
- e. Ensure that sufficient finances, staff and resources are put in place so that nature can return to past glories.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission. I agree to this submission being made public. Feel free to contact me in regards to any of this at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Gareth Rego
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File1:

File2:

File3: