

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria.

I write to you as a voter, a father and a lover of the bush.

I am not a scientist, I am not an expert on ecosystems but like many people I share concerns for our future.

I think during this time of covid-19 the public has grown to look with contempt on politicians who work to grow their own self-interests.

We seek leaders who will guide us through difficult times and make decisions on our behalf that benefit all society.

For me my expectations are that:

- The committee will carefully examine all relevant scientific evidence.
- Clearly summarize the impacts that we as Victorians are having on eco systems.
- Document solutions that will be politically palatable, morally supportable, and economically practical.
- Provide world class leadership in this space.

The general public will not tolerate partisan political stances that are morally bankrupt.

Are we impacting climate and our eco-systems?

I am really shocked when I hear people questioning our impact.

We need to trust our scientists.

Eco-system degradation and impact is not a recent phenomenon.

The following was reported in November 2019 by six Australian Professors.

“It's well established that unsustainable human activity is damaging the health of the planet. The way we use Earth threatens our future and that of many animals and plants. Species extinction is an inevitable end point.

It's important that the loss of Australian nature be quantified accurately. To date, putting an exact figure on the number of extinct species has been challenging. But in the most comprehensive assessment of its kind, our research has confirmed that 100 endemic Australian species living in 1788 are now validly listed as extinct.

Alarmingly, this tally confirms that the number of extinct Australian species is much higher than previously thought.”

(<https://theconversation.com/scientists-re-counted-australias-extinct-species-and-the-result-is-devastating-127611>, accessed August 2020)

I urge the committee to read this report.

Another sobering report from the united nations (May 2019) is headed

“Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’; Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’”

One of their conclusions

“The overwhelming evidence of the IPBES Global Assessment, from a wide range of different fields of knowledge, presents an ominous picture,” said IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson. “The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”

(<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>, accessed August 2020)

I urge the committee to read this report.

Please take this problem seriously.

We have not done well in the past and we must do a lot better in the future. When Europeans first arrived in Victoria, fish were abundant in the rivers and abundant oysters could be found on the beaches. It took us less than 4 years to disrupt the environment.

It is vital that you urgently devise a way to appropriately address the significant issues.

I am happy for my submission to be made public.

Anthony Bayley