

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 28 August 2020 9:14 PM  
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**Subject:** State of Victoria's Ecosystems Decline

**Categories:** Submissions

The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Environment and Planning  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Committee Manager and Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

RE: VICTORIA'S DECLINE OF ECOSYSTEMS

I am submitting my public Submission as a multi-tasked volunteer and Grants Coordinator for Portland Coastal Cliffs Inc., Sealliance.org.au, South West Woody Weeds Action Team Inc., Portland Field Naturalists, Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists, Strzelecki Bushwalking Group and Wildlife Officer for Victoria (although I am also a committee member of two National Associations with the environment and citizen science) as my past rescues have been within Marine, National and State Parks, country roads and private farms and residences where Australian mammals, birdlife and reptiles have been injured, starved by humans and climate change due to sea currents or soil degradation from woody weeds preventing growth of forest soils.

Firstly, I would like to inform the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning of my intention for my Submission to be a public document and my availability if required at any Hearings regarding the State of Victoria's Ecosystems Decline in regards to my own Submission.

My qualifications as a Certificate III Children's Educator as I have been a pre-primary and primary teacher through School of the Air to children of all nationalities living in remote areas of Australia including Queensland, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia. I have also taught and worked with children as pre-primary too in Victoria. As a mother and a dedicated environmentalist since 1960 whilst living in Carrum on a coastal property from Nepean Highway to the foreshore it's no wonder I have an OPEN WATER PADI DIVE qualification enjoying the marine species of Australia for more than 60 years.

Knowing suburbs like Aspendale in 1983 had Council dumping yellow sand on it as tides then were washing it away so too has Portland similar problems as Councils bury large pipes under the sand dunes where sea spurge prevents locals and tourists from enjoying 'their local beach' pumping sand on it again in summer while cliffs are eroding from wind damage from one end of Victoria to the other held precariously with endemic plantings and woody weeds. It's getting worse of course with the wind changes, rising seas as islands are washed in Fiji what has Australia learnt from other countries. As less and less

people are enjoying their local beach because of these problems. Dead penguins, fish and fishing lines tangled on seabirds, littered on foreshores, country roads and in our parks as we at the end of the food chain are eating the same plastics from Friday fish and chips, isn't what I envisaged my adult son would want in his life.

The Victorian Government invited me to a workshop at Dunkeld on National Forests as I and 40 others were invited to a town near the Grampians to discuss what we see as the role of the National and State Parks and how we perceive them. I was one of 10 people who did attend as I commended the others on their suggestions for better pathways in these parks, sustainable buildings with bio-toilets, camping grounds maintained with more water and sustainable fire wood no one mentioned the actual flora and fauna. I advised what the National and State Parks of Gippsland used to look like when I visited more than 38 years previously. Described the litter of leaves, rich soils, fungi plentiful, vines and creepers growing with old growth forest logs laying on designated paths as we gently climbed across or walked another way on the pathway well trodden compacted rich dark soils to our destinations. A canopy so dense it was difficult to see the sky as it rained, kept dry we stopped at impromptu creeks filling up fast deciding not to cross the bird life intense as a Kangaroo stopped me in my tracks we laughed.

At this meeting on this particular day I was most fortunate to meet a Volunteer from Glenelg Trust for Nature who took me on an extensive tour of the land they bought from a bank whose previous owners couldn't grow anything except Blue Gums since inheritance of the early settlers from England as the soil was ruined from decades of grazing. I'm pleased to say these hectares have now returned to the former wetlands it once was with dedicated volunteers ridding the ground of English garden growth replanting endemic to the area. It's been a sheer delight to watch the birds return here in record numbers. It's called Walker's Swamp.

A call one Saturday afternoon as I drove to Discovery Bay to rescue two fairy penguins shivering as I realised they were starving luckily three young 30 year olds saw them on the beach where they were holidaying at the local caravan park. I was able to box them carefully in my cardboard rescue box, with an old towel they were then driven from here to Warrnambool for a Veterinary Clinic which was closed by the time I got there. My mobile had died as fortunately a colleague from Conservation for Australia utilised her mobile to locate a Vet who was open all hours, once this was arranged I assisted the Vet while she examined each penguin advising they had been starved and she was thankful I took the initiative to locate another Vet for their safety and return to the wild. For the first time this year Volunteer Wildlife Officers have been able to apply for a grant for their rescues.

A phone call from a truck driver in the early hours of the morning to a friend on a boat on her way to French Island was told to ring me in Portland Victoria about his concerns of seeing a very fat penguin walking across a road near the Port of Portland as he advised the Port of Portland nor the Councillors of Glenelg Shire Council were pro-environment he wasn't going to be the one to declare it. Contacting Phillip Island Penguin Parade, Andre Chiaradia advising him of the fairy penguins at Portland one being considerably fat he advised me it was probably feeding a healthy family of penguins and was extremely pleased to know more penguin sightings were being informed. Although this wasn't

strictly a rescue I did report it to Wildlife Victoria who have recorded it on their log of calls.

Using a chain saw every Saturday and Tuesday for months to rid the Cobboboonee National Park areas, country roads, farmers properties and local resident gardens of the Sweet Pittosporum whilst crawling on grey soils hasn't been fun but necessary in an attempt to assist endemic plants to thrive. Walks with other Field Naturalists discovering fungi for our mobile camera photos or listening to honey eaters, noisy miners and other birdlife such as the hooded plovers at Cape Bridgewater beaches with Birdlife Australia workshops in Portland has encouraged residents to participate more often since they are also volunteering to assist wildlife.

One such incident was when a new family had purchased a pine plantation decided to cut their trees as a 'local' raised the alarm considering more than 150 koalas were living in the trees. A desperate attempt was made by volunteers to speak with the owners who were not cooperative during this time as emergency services from the Portland Fire Brigade, Volunteers and Woolworths provided containers for water for the remaining 70 koalas that did survive. Minister Lily D'Ambroiso fined the owners. It is not an isolated event in the area of Portland where wallabies starving have eaten hectares of native bush crossing the plains from South Australia or other parts of Victoria. Natural grasslands have all but disappeared in this area too which is not an ideal situation considering the monetary gain for farmers who were willing as others to plant these grasslands for the very benefit of the Australian fauna.

Biodiversity extinction is rapid since the bushfires which skipped not only Victorian borders but rivers and Alpine mountains still recovering from fires from two years ago the devastation of these areas has killed organisms, soil, fish, crabs, frogs, reptiles, birds, larger mammals as logging truck skill our fauna at night on country roads where road lighting is far too inadequate for motorists. Stopping to look at wombat, kangaroo or koala pouches is an every day occurrence for me not something I envisaged myself doing 20 years ago. Now its out of necessity to save our Australian fauna and flora from woody weeds and feral horses, pigs, deer and other predators no one seems concerned about any more. Hype in social media and printed media addressing these very concerns is reiterated daily as the bushfires of Victoria reached International countries. So concerned were friends in America and South Africa I got emails asking if I was anywhere near these area and yes I was and ready to accommodate anyone in need too.

I expect the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning will read and collate the concerns of us the Public, Environmental qualified scientists of botany, ecologists, marine experts etc., with a full brief of concerns to the Victorian State Ministers of Government for considerable increased funding to protect our Marine Parks which I would envisage so many more considering Victoria commenced this brain wave of an idea surely Minister Andrews can extend more coastal areas for protection for wallabies on our beaches seeking refuge with shelter under Sheoaks, food planted by volunteers. Breeding grounds for Whales, fish, krill upwelling each year for marine life including penguins and fish species, educational studies for students of all ages, nationalities and collating reports to their Universities in articles. Clean water without threats of gas or oil to our beaches, parks, farms and in Ramsar Wetlands which reach resident back yards as their properties

border these areas for the birdlife they enjoy. Enriching our National and State Parks with funding for more revegetation NOW not held up by Minister's gaining further reports before spending the Australian dollar as each individual plant and mammal, bird needs protecting in our precious, precarious environment. Effective government programs and substantial funding for more projects, more Landcare Facilitators for our farmers who are pro environment, more grants for not for profit Volunteer groups to plant and maintain coastal and forest areas. More decisions made for best practice of areas such as the Great Ocean Road, Grasslands and linking our National and State Parks for a greater understanding for school children, citizen scientists and Scientists study; solutions which lead to opportunities to restore our Victoria's environment.

I will continue to learn as I will be commencing modules on : Introduction to Conservation and Biology, Shorebirds and Waterbirds, Mapping and Spatial Programs, Marine and Aquatic Conservation, Pest Animals and Weeds and International Conservation. Which will enhance my practical learning and continue with a Diploma in Conservation, Bush Care and Land Management assisting the wildlife of Gippsland with other like minded volunteers. This time next year I sincerely hope my own garden is abundant with the birds and mammals I have mentioned with endemic plants to this area.

I Rosemary Margaret Race submit my public submission.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Kind regards  
Rosemary Margaret Race

  
Public Submission by me in my own words only.

“As a seed shoots, sunshine beckons it forward, bending to grow, a journey of thousands if not millions of years to form an old growth hollow surviving for another life” Rosemary Race.