

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

To whom it may concern,

The matter to which this inquiry relates is one that I feel very strongly about. Being an Australian and a Victorian who has travelled extensively, I believe that Victoria really is unlike anywhere else in the world. The coastal ranges to the west of Melbourne and the expansive beaches in Gippsland and the high country, along with Australia's unique flora and fauna make the ecosystems precious and valuable. And it is changing. That is not even a question in the public's mind. Anyone who has lived through the last few decades have witnessed events that seem extreme, even considering Australia's history of natural disasters.

The planet is changing in our lifetimes and before our eyes. The current rate of extinction is between 800 and 10,000 years faster than if they were merely succumbing to the expected extinctions. Australia seems particularly vulnerable to changes in the earth's climate, but our leaders are reluctant to effect change. The short term of political cycle and the manipulation of the democratic system have allowed individuals and cooperation's to exploit our natural resources to the edge without any plan for sustaining the level of comfort long term that we experience currently. Destructive forestry and mining practices are responsible for what I see as the pillaging of the natural world. Although some are necessary, better regulation is needed and protection of fragile ecosystems to ensure the planet is the place it is today for future generations of Australians.

The state government needs to do what the people are telling them to do and protect the land. Finding ways to dilute environmental protection laws in order to satisfy short term political goals is not what the consensus want, that is clear. Deliberately using current distractions to push through destructive logging and potentially lethal mining practices, previously banned, is an outrageous miscarriage of public trust. We need our elected officials to represent us, not the Unions or large cooperation's who are only interested in profit at any cost.

In the past decade, three Australian species have become extinct- the Christmas Island forest skink, Christmas Island pipistrelle and Bramble Cay melomys. With the current rate of deforestation and land destruction, it won't be long before national symbols become a part of a depressing history of neglect. They simply won't survive unless large sways of countryside are protected and allowed to regenerate. Small pockets of protected wilderness are too fragile to withstand the pressures climate change and industry are placing on them. If we want the country to look like it does, in all its magnificence, in 50 years' time, we have to act now.

I appreciate the opportunity to be allowed to have my say and I realise that is a privilege. I just hope those who we have placed our trust in will listen.

Thank you.

