

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

29 August 2020

Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Here is my submission to be considered for the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

According to the Governments own Environment Victoria website:

Victoria is the most cleared state in Australia. Seventy percent of our forests have been destroyed. Our remaining native vegetation is under threat, surviving in isolated patches, and our freshwater environments are in decline.

Our protection laws are outdated and inadequate, and I have some serious concerns about what will be left of our natural fauna and flora in 20 years if the the authorities do not prioritise action, protection and reversal of the damage that has been done.

My partner and I moved to a small 50acre farm in The Gurdies, from Phillip Island, 2 years ago. During our time here we have planted close to 10,000 native plants and trees trying to help support the native animals and encourage them to reinhabit the land. It has been a pleasure and a joy to spend our days performing this work, and despite a persistent wombat, have had great success and look forward with hope to some of the native species returning.

During this learning curve, and the expansion of our own knowledge of natural flora and fauna, we have also become more aware of how barren so much of the local farming land is. In travelling around for work and to visit family, we have noticed that most farming land is just grass and fences.

I am in my early 50's, and I think I have grown up being used to seeing fields and fences and the occasional remnant strip of trees and thinking that as being normal. Now I now realise land which is now farm land was once majestic and dense forests. The land was stripped of its forest by early settlers and is now void of any indigenous fauna and thus areas of protection for the vulnerable animals.

Environment Victoria states that 30% of our indigenous species are classified as 'threatened'. Even with these survival classifications, there is little evidence that any real or effective action is taken to protect the species. With our environmental protection laws out of date and thankfully up for review, it is imperative that the current government put in laws that impel action and protect the future survival of our amazing natural habitats, or what will be left in an 100 years for our children's children's children. Currently there is a disturbing option for governments to 'do nothing' if a species is listed as critically endangered. It must be removed. Under political pressure & with escape clauses available, weaker governments may take the path of least resistance and do exactly that. The survival of animal species should not be at the discretion of a single person, but should benefit from the energy and consideration of a group of people to whom it's care is in their charge. Additional to this I believe a scaling of actions should be considered, and audited, according to the risk to the animal.

I am not qualified to know what the best actions are to help species survive, and imagine they will vary depending enormously. These actions may include purchasing parcels of land (hello Holden Proving Ground and the last area of untouched swampy marsh in Gippsland). But through personal experience I believe that also overlaying expectations that farm owners must plant out at least 5% of the land with strategically placed indigenous plantings to create green belts, would be of great benefit. There is much evidence that points to the increased productivity of farmland with this sort of planting.



I thank you for taking the time to read my hastily written effort. I appreciate you time and effort in considering all of the evidence put forward for such an important cause.

If not us, who? If not now, when?

Kind regards

Kerryn Scanlan

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]