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**From:** Sabrina Gray-Viggiano [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 May 2020 2:41 PM  
**To:** ecosystems  
**Subject:** Extinction Crisis Inquiry

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my interest in the extinction crisis inquiry in Victoria. I am an ecology and conservation graduate student, with a broad understanding of the impacts of biodiversity loss on the environment.

As a child, I spent weekends and after school riding my horses in state parks developing a deep love and emotional connection to woodlands, hearing birds sing to each other in the trees, and smelling eucalyptus leaves in the wind. I fear for, not only my own future, but for my children's futures, that they may not have the same, truly serene, experiences of nature that I had as a child.

Australia's flora and fauna are amongst the most endemic and bio-diverse in the world, with rich and unique history. We owe it to Australia, the land that has supported us for our entire lives, to protect and preserve it. We cannot continue to leech and destroy it, as we have in the past. Victoria has the highest rate of land clearing in the country, even though we are one of the smallest states physically. This is embarrassing. When I travel, I want to be proud of the state and the country that I come from, instead of being known for systemic climate denialism, and the fastest rate of extinction in the world.

We do have solutions to the bleak status of the environment that is currently plaguing Australia. We should fund a program like the NSW 'save our species' program, and fund monitoring programs to demonstrate progress of such programs. Also, I'd love to see restoration projects like treeplanting, and investing in a quality planning department in government. Properly resourcing such programs with quality staff, funds and infrastructure is critical to implementing effective biodiversity conservation.

With all of the issues that COVID-19 and the summer bushfires brought, the Victorian government now has a clean slate on how to approach environmental policies, legislation and funding solutions to biodiversity loss. If we keep going with the business as usual approach with coal, waste and land clearing, we will confront bushfires and diseases more frequently, and more severely. We cannot afford, in any sense of the word, to continue as we are going. Lets listen to the research and experts in the field, and fund these programs to save Victoria's native biodiversity.

I care, the community cares, and we need to make biodiversity a priority in the Victorian government.

Sabrina Gray-Viggiano  
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I consent to have this submission made public.