



**From:** POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>  
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**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

**Categories:** Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Ms Trish Stuart



**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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I currently live in a growing country town and have done so for the past 22 years and I am writing this submission as I hold grave fears for our environment and the native wildlife in them. Human activity is a major contributor to the displacement and killing of our native species in the form of animal agriculture, logging, housing/business developments and roads. An example of this is the ongoing development of the Lancefield/Melbourne road. Major trees along this road have been cut down and ripped up to make way for the expansion of this road, to little benefit of the road users. Huge housing developments on the outskirts of Romsey and Sunbury have seen massive amounts of land taken over and cleared pushing and destroying any local wildlife out of this area. The extent of the number of dwindling animals and loss of species due to damaged and destroyed habitat and ecosystems is devastating and I fear very much for the environment that is being left for my children. I feel absolutely powerless about our impact on our native species. I believe that Government needs to step up dramatically to take a very good look at these devastating impacts caused by human activity and help save our unique wildlife and biodiversity.

Our laws need to be drastically improved to help stop ongoing habitat loss and protect our environment. Our laws need to take into account that our animals have a right to a home.

We need to stop land clearing for animal agriculture and support more plant-based agriculture and reduce animal agriculture.

We need to stop logging our remnant native forests which are major habitat for native wildlife. Our coast and bays need to be protected along with the Great Southern Kelp Forests.

We need to consider Ecotourism opportunities for wetlands, coastal communities, forests and grasslands. This offers protection of these animals and provides economical benefits to these localised towns and areas.

Our native species are not pests! Kangaroo and wallaby populations are in fast decline and appear to be able to be wiped out with a stroke of a pen! A classic example of this is the ongoing issue with the Lilydale kangaroos. Humane alternatives have been provided to Government however they have still not made the sensible decision to relocate

these animals.

The authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) System should be terminated or majorly overhauled. The Victorian Government relies on outdated and poorly-monitored figures and its reports and quoted numbers are illogical and non-sensical. There needs to be an end to the commercial harvest of kangaroos and wallabies. Our most iconic wildlife species needs to be celebrated and not vilified. Why can't there be ecotourism programs put in place around these beautiful and unique animals?

Duck shooting needs to end. This is long overdue! This outdated and barbaric sport has helped to decimate populations that have already come under stress from drought and bushfires. Duck shooting pollutes and damages wetlands such as Ramsar - listed wetlands and it encourages and enables violence. These areas should again be celebrated for their diversity of bird life not wiped out or decimated by a few gun toting individuals. Again, ecotourism programs can play an important role in these areas that can be beneficial for these animals and the local towns' economy.

Dingos are native animals and are important in the ecosystem. They are not an introduced species nor are they wild dogs. We need to look at banning devastating poisons such as 1080. This poison is banned in most countries. 1080 poison kills indiscriminately and is an animal welfare issue. We should not be killing our Dingos to appease farmers. Alternatives to farmers that may be more cost effective than these poisons could be the use of flock guardians such as alpacas, marambas or donkeys. These animals stay with their flock and keep predators away.

Our native Bats are important pollinators and critical to our ecosystems. These animals have been greatly impacted by drought and rising temperatures, land clearing and use of nest on fruit trees. Only a few days ago a local council was looking to do tree trimming night work at Cannes Reserve. This area is a maternal hub for pregnant grey-headed flying foxes due to give birth shortly and this action can have these animals abort their babies due to the stress that these night works would inflict. Better decisions need to be made regarding the timing of these planned actions and what impacts they have on the local native wildlife. Surely it's not rocket science. Common sense must prevail on these decisions.

Exploiting our native forests and logging is detrimental to our environment and wildlife. I believe logging is due to start or has already started in fire-ravaged forests. This is devastating and it's the last thing our wildlife needs. My understanding is that logged native forests mostly end up in landfill, not in building and furniture. I find this heartbreaking. What a waste, destroying homes for wildlife and habitat for what? Water is also polluted by logging activities.

Exploiting land and water predominately for animal agriculture leads to unhealthy soil and water is diverted from natural waterways to facilitate agriculture. More major impacts for our environment.

Pollution is also a huge issue with chemicals used in Agriculture such as fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides as well as antibiotics used in animal agriculture and the impacts these have on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Plastics too are also a huge problem with physical and chemical contaminations of soils and waterways/oceans. We need to look at better alternatives of dealing with and manufacturing of plastics. Can more be done regarding recycling of plastics? What are other countries doing successfully in dealing with their plastic use/reduction? Can it be implemented here? Can we look at reducing the manufacturing of so much plastic? Prior to the pandemic I thought Australia was moving in the right direction with recycling etc but now I fear all that work has come undone. The extra rubbish attributed to the pandemic ie face masks/PPE is frightening. Another blow, I feel to the environment.

I feel we need to reduce consumption of animal products and reduce animal agriculture. We need to develop more plant based food industries to replace animal food products and we need to encourage more plant rich diets. This would greatly help in reducing any further land clearing and habitat destruction.

We also have quite a number of non-native species in Victoria as a result of human actions. We need to be accountable for this and as such need to create effective and humane solutions. Blowing them off the planet and poisoning them is not right nor is it effective. These animals have a right to life and they do have their own families.

An example of this is the Brumbies. Can we not allocate land to them or relocate them and perhaps apply fertility control to stop them breeding to allow them to live out their lives? Surely the Brumbies have cemented their right to live having carried Australian soldiers on their backs in battle during WW1 and have such a unique history with Australia? (Just as a side note: feral pigs do so much more damage than what Brumbies are alleged to do). Can the same be done for deer regarding fertility control?

Cat's are major killers of native wildlife also. Can there be stricter laws in regards to keeping cats inside overnight or confined to properties to help protect wildlife?

In conclusion, our laws need to be updated to protect what we have left in Victoria. Our diverse wildlife needs immediate ongoing protection from greedy human activity that does not have our environment in its best interests. Ongoing land clearing, logging, destroying grasslands and exploitation of our animals, habitats, land and water needs to cease for our wildlife to have a chance. We don't 'own' this land, we are the care takers only. We have a responsibility to look after what we have and so far we haven't had a great track record. We need to turn this around ASAP so that we stop losing our unique wildlife at such an alarming rate. We have a beautiful state and I want our children and their children's children to continue to have the unique environment and wildlife that is Victoria.

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