

April Newton



30.5.2020

I am writing to make a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into tackling extinction in Victoria. I give permission for my submission to be made public and am happy to be contacted regarding it.

To the Environment and Planning Committee:

There is much to be done in protecting our native species from extinction and many factors that need to be assessed and mitigated. Taken as a whole the problem of environmental degradation in Victoria can seem overwhelming, but I believe there are a few key areas that are well-understood, straightforward and not contentious and which would benefit immensely just from increasing financial support.

Invasive species control is one of these areas, and which I will focus on in this submission. Victoria was relatively isolated for millennia before Europeans arrived, and in the last 200 years we have let dozens of species loose on a carefully balanced ecosystem and watched as they've brought death and destruction to our native flora and fauna. The damage done to our wilderness by species such as feral cats, foxes, common mynahs, blackberries and carp cannot be understated. Furthermore, many of these species act as handicaps for restoration works done by our environmental organisations: damaging habitat and preying on vulnerable and re-establishing native species. They necessitate the expensive construction of fences around nature reserves to protect native populations within, and prevent dispersal beyond these areas by species for whom conservation efforts have been a success.

I am calling for greater funding and support to be supplied to organisations such as The Invasive Species Council, Parks Victoria and The Australian Wildlife Conservancy in their programs to control and eradicate invasive species. I believe the target should be complete eradication of the most damaging introduced species – feral cats and foxes in particular – with the aim to eventually move on to eradicate those species with less of an impact. An Australia-wide effort would be ideal, but Victoria has the power to lead the way. It might not require much more than increased government funding and vocal support of these projects. As long as we are only able to chip away at the populations of invasive species then the problem will plague us forever. Funding and resources for a big coordinated push may succeed where our past efforts have failed, and begin to undo the damage these species have caused, which in bringing them here we have facilitated.

Sincerely,

April Newton