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Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Mr Neil Marriott



SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Despite the protection of the Flora and Fauna Act (Vic) and the Federal EPBC Act, it is simple for developers to continue to destroy identified areas of habitat or plants or animals listed under either, or both these sets of legislation. Examples of this are far too numerous to mention, but here in western Victoria two immediate examples are:

1. Despite the recommendations of the State Governments OWN agency for the extension of, and permanent protection of Mt Cole State Forest, Vic Forest has continued to clear fell large blocks of this rare western forest. This despite the fact that this forest contains the ONLY site for the recently listed Grevillea montis-cole, as well as numerous other listed rare and endangered plants and animals.
2. The State Government has repeatedly ignored independent environmental surveys, by some of the states top experts, to allow Main Roads Vic (formerly VicRoads) to proceed with plans to establish a multi-million dollar development of an entirely new section of the Western Highway that will run straight through EPBC listed Box/Gum Grassy Woodland, Spring Soaks and Golden Sunmoth breeding grounds between Buangor and Ararat. Both of these organisations are government authorities, yet they are acting against the environment far worse than any private commercial developer. In most years recently, VicRoads clears more native vegetation than any other public or private developer.

It is quite clear, that our current sets of environmental laws are purely tokenistic, and ensure NO protection of listed rare, threatened or endangered plants, animals and communities.

They are administered by the Department of Environment, Lands, Water and Planning. A simple analysis of the functions of this department shows immediate conflict in aims, goals and outcomes. Aside from this, the department is grossly underfunded, and cannot employ well qualified experts, capable of deciding complex biological and environmental issues.

As a result, it is blatantly clear that our environmental laws require a massive shakeup if we wish to continue to protect our unique flora and fauna into the future. If we continue the way it is at present, each application for the removal of an area of state or federally listed flora, fauna or vegetation community is almost ALWAYS given in favour of the applicant, with vegetation offsets, combined with management funding for that offset being the only

requirement on the applicant. This is preached as "Net Gain" but the long term or even the IMMEDIATE effect is the removal of an area of our States endangered biodiversity. If we continue with this bizarre behaviour then little by little this will result in the ultimate extinction of far too many of our wonderful plants and animals in the not too distant future.

Our laws are a failure, they must be changed for the better of our environment, not just rubber stamped to aid in development.

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File1:

File2:

File3: