



**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 Bronwyn Hardisty



**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Victoria's ecosystem is in decline and increased funding for parks is necessary to protect species. In order to conserve our natural heritage and its rich biodiversity, we must protect remaining habitats. National parks are fundamental in protecting nature from unprecedented pressures. An increase to one percent of state expenditure is needed.

National parks and conservation reserves protect areas of significance from some damaging activities; but to be truly effective they also need active management, to combat the multitude of weeds and pest animals such as deer, pigs, foxes, horses, cats, and to manage visitors. Our national parks need to be managed by a well-resourced team of the very best scientists and land managers.

- Victoria's parks network contains 4,728 of the state's 5,145 native plant species (91.9 per cent) and 1,102 of its 1,405 native animal species (78.4 per cent).
- Around 70 per cent of the Victorian coastline is managed as national or state parks, coastal reserves, or marine national parks or sanctuaries. These areas protect against storm damage, flooding and erosion.
- More than one million hectares of our water catchments are located within Victoria's national parks. The market value of water run-off supplied through just nine Victorian national parks is estimated at \$244 million per year.
- The Victorian parks network is a major carbon sink, with at least 270 million tonnes of carbon stored in land-based parks and 850,000 tonnes in marine parks.
- The 50 million visits to national, state and metropolitan parks see tourists spending \$2.1 billion per year, and generating 20,000 jobs. Of course, this must be managed carefully.

Hence our national parks require proper protection and management.

The key to this is to ensure that there is appropriate funding from the government to do the job.

Currently, Parks Victoria manages 18 per cent of Victoria and approximately five per cent of our marine waters – yet it receives less than 0.5 per cent of state government expenditure. Increasing funding for parks to one per cent of state expenditure is essential, to enable our great natural areas to be properly protected.

In the face of climate change and rapid population growth, greater funding is essential: parks require at least one per cent of state expenditure.

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