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Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Sally Faraday
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing to express my concern about decreasing bio-diversity in the state of Victoria and to call for tougher legislation to prevent irreversible habitat and species loss in Victoria's Marine National Parks.

Some of my fondest memories are set against the backdrop of Victoria's National Parks and the ocean in particular. Camping trips to Wilson's Promontory in and out of the water at Squeaky Beach were a feature of my childhood and those of many of my friends. Windswept afternoons marveling at the awesome power of the waves striking the skirts of the Twelve Apostles are indelibly printed on my memory. The sense of living within toe-dipping distance of one of the most extraordinary, inhospitable, diverse and awe-inspiring ecosystems on the planet has always been a part of Australia's identity, and reverence for the land of Australia as well as its' oceans is the lynch-pin of the culture of the true custodians of this land; our First Peoples.

Sadly, I fear that my daughter will be unable to share in my experiences. While Victoria is home to over 100,000 terrestrial species of plants and animals (Source: Victorian National Parks Association) it is also the most cleared state in Australia with the 2018 government biodiversity report more than half of biodiversity indicators are poor and trending downwards (Source: <https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/reports/state-environment-2018/biodiversity-plants-animals>)

Australia's southern waters are home to some of the rarest species of plants and animals in the world. 90 percent of marine species in Southern waters are unique to our coastline and these marine areas are more diverse than even the iconic Great Barrier Reef. They are nursery grounds for majestic Southern Right Whales and nesting sites for Victoria's Fairy Penguins. Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary alone is home to 80 unique species of fish and yet only 5.3 percent of these marine sanctuaries in Southern Waters are classified as 'no-take' areas, meaning they are exposed to over-fishing and exploitation without regulation. Further pressures such as industrialization, pollution and our changing climate also affect

this incredible species-rich environment.

In other words, without robust protections, Victoria will be responsible for the extinction of some of the most unique marine species in the world. We will lose these plants and animals forever; losses which will have profound consequences for entire ecosystems, some of which contribute naturally to carbon sequestration and the mitigation of the effects of sea-level rise along our southern coastline. (Source: VPNA) Our children will inherit a future of erosion, extreme tidal events and polluted ocean.

To this end I am calling on the Victorian Government to -

REMOVE ITS BAN on the creation of new marine national parks and to actively create new ones to protect against habitat and species loss.

CONDUCT A REVIEW of marine national parks, sanctuaries and protective areas independent of NRSMPA's goals and principles which I believe show bias in relation to industry and recreational users at the expense of adequate conservation

INVEST MORE in marine management and in scientific research to protect these marine sanctuaries

HALT LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT in Westerport Bay such as the proposed AGL LNG Import Terminal Facility to protect the Ramsar Wetland

IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT COUNCIL in relation to the management of marine parks. (the VEAC Coastal Reserves Assessment 2020, VEAC Public Lands Assessment 2017, and the VEAC Marine Investigation, 2014)

Once these rare and extraordinary habitats and species are gone, they are gone forever. In the strongest possible terms I call on the government to consider the impacts on the future of all our children and protect them.

Sally Faraday

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