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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

Mr Roger Morris Gamble
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Committee member.

This submission is to be added to my previous contribution / submission.

I missed relating in my previous submission, my experience of privately owned land mostly owned by farmers, hobby farmers, and corporations.
In Australia we have never had laws which properly control how forested areas should be managed. This is vital because of the large areas involved.
Land clearing without permission is still being practised with gay abandon and without any significant consequences being implemented upon them. The cost to the amount of forest cover left throughout Australia, and the quality of the remaining ecosystems is massive. The last 50 years of such uncontrolled clearing in Victoria is to be strongly deplored.

Controls should be...

- No clearing within 50m of gullies or creeks.
- No clearing on hilltops.
- No clearing on hillsides above a certain grade.
- No clearing without permission.
- All forested areas to be fenced off, so that no livestock can graze there.
- Encouragement of replanting such cleared areas is to be not only encouraged financially but required.

The consequence for not having these laws is everywhere apparent. Lower forest stories are compacted, grazed out, eroded in exposed areas, ground litter disappears, water instead of being held in the area becomes run off, and is quickly lost from that particular part of the catchment. Evaporation in the area diminishes and so does the local rainfall. The lowered amount of ground water on the hill sides means that the flora is stressed and species die out. Germination of species diminishes and the last to go, the tree cover, will eventually die out as well. Devastation from excessively hot bush fires, in these dried out forest areas so damaged, is increased substantially.

Creation of a body, independent from the forest commission, to oversee these laws, with severe financial penalties for breaking them is essential.

Farms can be up to 23% forested with the same financial productivity, as if the whole farm was cropped and grazed. This is because of the influence of the forest fauna and flora in creating a modified climate, that extends out from its edges, and for the fauna in pollinating and controlling insect pests, etc.

Governments ought to encourage farmers financially to plant forest areas on their farms to maintain and increase the biodiversity of local areas and to provide corridors for wildlife to again flourish, and to increase the local and wider Victorian rainfall. The impact on improved tourism in Victoria would be immense.

Planting of indigenous tree species plantations on previously cleared areas could relieve pressure on having to still clear native forest areas in so called national parks.

Trees take many hundreds of years to form hollows - the forest commissions 80 years cycle of clearing is having a severe impact on the longevity of our native fauna and flora health and diversity, also on total rainfall and the amount of runoff into our water catchment dams. They treat the forest as their own resource to farm and clear as they please, with very little government control over their profligate land use. Government laws and control actions are not working, and are to be strongly condemned.

There is much that is very negative that is happening in our private and public owned forests. But there is much that government initiatives, controls regulations, and financial incentives could do to change the face of Victoria to make to be truly the garden state of Australia.

I have spent the last 4 years re-establishing 4 hectares of native forest on private land in the middle of Doncaster, on Doncaster Road. There are a number of still unnamed species there. I have planted a thousand or so natives there, indigenous to Doncaster. The previous ecosystem that was there, is gradually re-establishing, now that it is not being mowed down every week, and the weeds have been removed. The birds, bats, lizards, insects, etc are also coming back. This can become part of a corridor to enable their movement through the area. The council will have to do their part to create planted road corridors and replanted local park areas.

Thanks for taking the time to read my submission. I hope that you will do something creative and left field that will enrich our Victoria environment. Building a great forest area would be a great achievement and legacy to hand on to future generations.

Our wealth is not in destroying our forests, but in following the example of the Japanese - who are doing all that they can to save them - every last hectare.

Kind regards,
Roger Gamble.

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File1:

File2:

File3: