

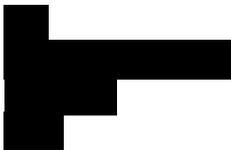


From: POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 31 August 2020 12:38 PM
To: ecosystems
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Dr Joanne Hayes



SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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As an Allied Health Care Professional, this is of great concern to me for the future of my children and that of the future of humanity.

Protecting our unique ecosystems and wild spaces will support the development of emerging opportunities for this sector where health and wellbeing strategies and services, particularly mental health, need natural spaces.

Of particular interest to me, is the trending increase of urban living. According to World Bank statistics, Since 2002, urban population in Australia has been increasing each year. As of 2019, Urban population in Australia, stands at 86.12%.

(<https://tradingeconomics.com/australia/urban-population-percent-of-total-wb-data.html>)

Two main points of concern stand out here;

1. More clearing of land and subsequent effects to fragile ecosystems, and
2. Amount of accessible green space available for human interactivity and therefore the effects on people's physical and mental health.

Human health is dependent on the health of their natural environments!

There is so much research coming out, that shows how integral nature is in mental and physical health of humans.

Japan is interesting, they have known about the health benefits of natural environments for decades, and implemented them into their public health care system through a practice called Shinrin Yoku.

(Use google translator, See: <http://www.fo-society.jp/quarter/>) (<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/12/2/1874>)

With Urban sprawl, I feel it's important to consider factoring in Green spaces into existing and new developments. Covid-19 Stage 4 restrictions have highlighted the need for this as some people, depending on where they live, don't

have access to a green space within a 5km radius of their homes!

(See: <https://theconversation.com/340-000-melburnians-have-little-or-no-parkland-within-5km-of-their-home-144069>).

Further research shows that building that have close access to green spaces show less crime.

(See: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0013916501333002>)

Nature is so fundamental in the health and wellbeing of humans, that due process needs to be carefully considered when clearing land and developing land particularly for urban living.

When people are healthier they are more productive.

I also fully support the Victorian National Parks Association when they state;

{ "Victoria has the highest number of threatened species by subregion in Australia. Since European settlement there has been a progressive rate of native animal and plant extinctions with Victoria losing 18 mammal species, 2 birds, 1 snake, 3 freshwater fish, 6 invertebrates and 51 plants. Of the 3,330 known Victorian species, 49 are extinct and 2,097 (63%) are on the Threatened Species Advisory Lists.

There has been an increasing trend in the number of critically endangered and vulnerable vertebrate groups, specifically reptiles, and an increase in the number of endangered vertebrates. Of the known species, those that are threatened include: 22% terrestrial mammals, 19% birds, 30% reptiles and 43% amphibians.

More than a quarter of Victoria's wetlands have been lost since European settlement, and the remaining are mostly in poor condition.

Native vegetation continues to be lost at approximately 4,000 habitat hectares per year. (See: www.ces.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/SoE2018ScientificAssessment_B.pdf)

Key Points:

- * Habitat fragmentation – caused by centuries of land clearing, but slowly but surely still happening.
 - * Climate change – this is multiplying impacts of other drivers of decline, such as fire and water.
 - * Inappropriate fire regimes – especially unseasonal or too frequent fire.
 - * Invasive animals – such as feral deer, pigs, goats, horses, rabbits, cats and foxes.
 - * Invasive plants – such as serrated tussock and willows.
 - * Native forest logging – which fragments forests and damages habitat for forest-dependent species.
 - * Unsustainable hunting of native wildlife – like native duck shooting or over-fishing.
 - * Altered water regimes – due to dams or over-extraction.
 - * Population growth – especially around metropolitan and large urban centres, lead to permanent land clearing and fragmentation.
 - * Land-use intensification – including increased grazing pressure or changing from grazing to cropping or irrigation.
- Inadequate public resources for ecosystem management – increased investment needed as we are still going backwards."}

Mental health has become a major concern for governments so it is vitally important to make decisions that assist in balancing our delicate ecosystems and human health and wellbeing.

Again, protecting our unique ecosystems and wild spaces will support the development of emerging opportunities for this sector where health and wellbeing strategies and services, particularly mental health, need natural spaces.

Thank you.

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File1:

File2:

File3: