



From: POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>
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To: ecosystems
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Ms Jacinta Plucinski



SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Environment and Planning Committee,

I would like to make a submissions to the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline.

I grew up in east Melbourne, surrounded by nature reserves, orchards and paddocks that I ran free in, explored and discovered animals and trees. I loved it.

Looking back, having an understanding of how we fitted into a a bigger, natural world, made me grounded, connected, and lighthearted. Funnily, it also made me a kinder person.

Over the years, as I grew up, buildings and roads began to crowd and threaten my nature reserves, and the paddocks and orchards turned into housing developments.

My wild areas immediately near me shrank but I was getting older and I had a car. I was able to discover even bigger, more eclectic and more wild areas further afield.

Nature was abundant and limitless it seemed, so I didn't think much of it. After all this was progress wasn't it, and progress is inevitable right?

I started hiking, camping and exploring areas around Melbourne, and then Australia - The Yarra Ranges, the Mornington Peninsula, Phillip Island and along the coast in the South East of Victoria, Uluru, Kakadu, Daintree, Margaret River, and many places in between.

Then work, and a desire to see the world led me overseas. For 20 years, I've lived, worked and travelled extensively across Asia, Europe, Middle East, and The Americas.

Whilst each continent has its own wonders, I'm continually gobsmacked, humbled and proud at how incredible,

diverse and special Australia's natural landscapes, ecosystems and wildlife are. There is truly nothing like it anywhere else.

But returning here, and seeing the extent of the devastation and destruction that has, and is still, happening, I feel sick.

It distresses me to see the extinction levels of unique animals that are only found on this continent, it angers me to see the loopholes in protection legislation and the large destruction of ecosystems for a small, disproportionate gain, and it frightens me to see the ferocity and devastation of bushfires.

Our country is burning, literally.

It sickens me that we, as a society, know how precarious the environmental systems that sustain us are, how despite this, we're destroying them, and despite that it's happening now, we lack the urgency, leadership and action to change it.

We trust and rely on our governments to see long term, to make hard decisions, and disappoint businesses and industries, because it's the right thing to do for all of us (even the businesses and industries who are adversely affected economically - their model isn't sustainable).

We need to do everything we can to protect and restore nature, including recognising the rights and practices of Traditional Custodians, who have been managing these landscapes for the past 60 000 + years (that is one of the things I'm most proud of as an Australian).

PLEASE!

The Victorian state government's commitment to a 2030 industry transition must be brought forward. This is urgent.

Two immediate priorities are protection of unburnt Greater Glider habitat, and a continued moratorium on logging in East Gippsland.

There are opportunities for the state government to protect forests for all Victorians to enjoy now and into the future.

Two community led initiatives are the proposed Great Forest National Park and Emerald Link conservation economy proposal.

In the face of climate catastrophe, Victoria's forests play a critical role in removing carbon pollution from the air we all breathe, nourishing us with clean air and safe, clean drinking water. The Victorian state government must develop carbon accounting and policies that include forests.

The state government must urgently implement and properly resource Action Statements (plans for recovery) for all threatened plants and wildlife. Victoria's plants and wildlife are at risk, with over 2000 recognised as threatened with extinction however only 15% have Action Statements.

The rights and interests of Traditional Custodians should be recognised in all aspects of land and water management, as well as decision-making in relation to their traditional lands, including traditional management practices such as cultural fire. First Nations - declining ecosystems have profound implications for First Nations.

Victoria needs a new, independent, well resourced conservation regulator to police deforestation and other destructive industries. The EPA is the independent watchdog for pollution, but currently there is no independent watchdog to ensure industries comply with environmental laws, with numerous breaches to laws continuing to occur and a long history of regulators turning a blind eye.

Community rights must be guaranteed when governments are making environmental decisions, including the right to participate, the right to access necessary information, the right to challenge environmental decisions and the

right to transparency in government decision making.

We know what is right, and we can do it!

Thank you for hearing my voice.

Jacinta Plucinski

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File1:

File2:

File3: