

Environment and Planning Committee

Inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria

31/8/202

Dear members of the committee,

I would like to make a submission to the inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria.

I was born in Carlton in 1999 and I have spent most of my whole life of 21 years in Melbourne and its surrounding areas throughout Victoria. Ever since I was little my family would bring me to beautiful nearby forest areas such as Toolangi, the Otways and Marysville. Forest areas such as these were such a blessing to grow up around as they are a perfect environment for connecting back with nature and learning about the unique Australian environment. I count myself as being extremely lucky to have been born and raised in the country with the most endemic species in the world.

It is truly heartbreaking to see the devastation our bushfire periods bring with them however seeing how the Aussie bush is able to bounce back from them over time is stunning. I still remember the Black Saturday bushfires from when I was younger and remember having to evacuate the town of Marysville just a day or two before fires swept through it.

I am even more stunned however by the destruction that is brought upon these areas by rampant logging schemes that gut these natural places of their precious ecosystems and kill everything in their wake. What is even harder to comprehend is just how many of these schemes are being approved by the government, especially since they take place during the periods after bushfires in which the various forest ecosystems are rebuilding and bouncing back.

The forests in Victoria play home to so many precious species such as the Great Sooty Owl, Greater Glider Possums, Lyrebirds and of course our state emblem, the Leadbeater's possum. Seeing species like these edge their way closer towards extinction year by year due to constant habitat loss breaks my heart. I believe we have a responsibility as caretakers of the land to preserve these species so that future generations have the ability to witness these beautiful species just as we have had the chance to. Seeing these species follow the same path as the Thylacine would be horrible.

Looking at the increasing global environmental issues caused by global warming it is no secret that we need to mitigate and reduce carbon emissions everywhere. Forests are one of our greatest allies in this need with the huge amount of carbon they deal with. On top of this they attract rainfall that filters water into the catchment areas that supply Melbourne with some of the best drinking water in the world.

The fact that the Victorian government continues to approve more and more logging coupes makes no ecological sense and is clearly wrong. Its now 2020 and we have at our hands a huge wealth of environmental research that clearly outlines the importance of these forests not just to its inhabitants but to people as well.

If you zoom out and look at the broader picture, Victoria's natural places form part of the intricate web of life that is integral to the survival of all life on Earth. In these times where people are seeking refuge as a result of devastation wrought by the changing climate and destruction of our environment, we must act as the global citizens we are and do everything we can to safeguard our future as one with clean air, water, food, and places of spiritual nourishment.

We need to do everything in our power 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.

As you undertake this important inquiry into Victoria's extinction crisis, I urge you to ensure that:

Community rights are 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.

The rights and interests of Traditional Custodians are 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.

The Victorian state government's commitment to a 2030 native forest logging industry transition is brought forward, including: immediate protection of Greater Glider habitat; a continued moratorium on logging in East Gippsland; releasing support for working people before 2024.

Plans for recovery of threatened plants and wildlife are implemented urgently and properly resourced.

The government protects forests for all Victorian's to enjoy now and into the future including supporting the Emerald Link conservation economy proposal for East Gippsland.

We have the rare opportunity in this time and place to protect a beautiful, unique and precious group of ecosystems. I urge all policy makers, public spokespeople and politicians to do the right thing and treat our environment with the respect and care that it deserves.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission, and I invite any further discussion via email at

[REDACTED]

Sincerely, Max Bradley

[REDACTED]