

**From:** Emma Tkalcevic [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 9 June 2020 4:11 PM  
**To:** ecosystems  
**Subject:** Extinction Inquiry submission

Emma Tkalcevic  
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter as a submission to the Extinction Inquiry, as a fellow Victorian who wants their voice heard.

I am someone who has grown up in nature, and spent my childhood going on holidays to each corner of Victoria rather than venturing interstate or overseas. This state is where my love for natural landscapes, ecosystems and nature begun. As a child, I remember being surrounded much more by wildlife, whereas my only encounters these days occur in more heavily visited areas like Wilsons Prom, where many animals are fed by tourists.

I have dedicated my life in education to understanding the earths systems, where I hold a degree in Ecology and Conservation Biology, and Geographical Science, and am currently researching climate change. Alongside my studies, I work within a local government. My education and government experience has helped me to understand the difficulties of balancing the use of natural resources (logging, dams, urbanisation etc) with the protection of nature, as well as budgeting between the many other different issues that Victorians face.

Despite trying to be understanding of the current state of Victorias environment, I continue to be quite appalled by my first hand experiences. In recent trips to Great Otway and Baw Baw NP, I have been exposed to the immense scale in which logging continues to occur, and more significantly, the fact that this logging is occurring up to the very edge of protected national park. Much of these areas are exposed as soon as one veers off of the main road. I am horrified to imagine just how much more freshly cleared land I have passed that I have not noticed.

Of particular significant, the fact that so much land surrounding Baw Baw NP, habitat of Victorias Leadbeaters possum (which only recently was found to not be extinct) remains unprotected and completely destroyed. This is appalling, and I am so disappointed that Victoria has cleared over 66% of natural habitat – more than any other Australian state. It is no wonder 120 Victorian plants and animals are on the brink of extinction.

Of these species, over 70 are home to the areas that continue to be logged in Australia.  
This is not protecting our beautiful wildlife.

Not only is Victoria damaged by fires, which will continue to increasingly threaten land as climate change and resultant dry weather events intensify, but nature itself will become increasingly at risk.

Infrastructure needs to be put in place to mitigate the impacts that nature will face.  
Continuing as business as usual is not an option.

#### **What do I want to see?**

- Environmentally friendly and conscious economic recovery plans post COVID-19. Not investing in non-renewable energy and industries that continue to damage land and degrade our soil quality.
- Land restoration – so much of Victorias landscapes have been cleared and remain unproductive. Wide scale tree planting must occur to revegetate our country, to improve the quality of our water, air, health and habitats. Particular focus must be put on bushfire effected regions, as well as to incentivise land owners to plant more vegetation on their land.

- Strengthen nature laws!! The logging of native, untouched forests is criminal and must stop ASAP. 1% of central highlands mountain ash ecosystems remain. This could easily be wiped out by fires, as well as other critical habitats, and must be protected without question.
- Stop the westerport gas ship terminal. There is no long term benefit to this project. As someone who surfs in this bay regularly, it would be a disgrace to see this nature occur. We need to stop using gas, not invest in it.
- Stop clearing grassland habitat – this habitat has so much ecological significance.
- More investment into saving species facing extinction – not just the koalas – ecosystems work as a whole.
- Weed and invasive species eradication programs. This is a hard task, I know, but it is something that we must keep within as much control as possible.
- **Serious investment in climate change mitigation** – I am proud that we have a net zero target by 2050, but yet we continue to fight the investment of new offshore gas or coal exploration southwest vic, westernport etc). I would love to see net zero reached earlier. To protect nature, climate change must be acted upon, or you will see mass extinction.

Please, act on our nature seriously.

I don't want to look back in history and see that the government screwed up their final chance.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Tkalčević

