

New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

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To: ecosystems <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Ms Rachael Ferguson



Phillip Island Nature Parks



SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing a submission today as I am particularly concerned about habitat loss due to growing population in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

I bought a house in Cowes on Phillip Island, informally known as "Red Rocks". I am 28 years old, and bought here because of the beautiful eucalyptus trees, native vegetation and amazing wildlife. I thought it would be a perfect spot to raise a family. Unfortunately, in the last 12 months alone I have seen a number of large trees cut down by residents with no law preventing them to do so (due to the BMO overlay brought in in 2009, despite suburbia in Cowes not being a high bushfire risk). In other areas, developers are clearing land for new subdivisions, and land is being cleared for cattle and sheep.

Projects such as AGL at Crib Point should not be approved. Legislation should protect habitats for wildlife, especially habitats of international significance such as RAMSAR wetlands. Renewables are the future, and we have plenty of roofs for solar, we don't need to be destroying habitat to create the energy we need.

Out of this enquiry I want to see stronger environment legislation and planning provisions that protects out native vegetation, and wildlife. Projects with Large trees should not be removed to make way for homes, infrastructure or crops, particularly in areas such as Phillip Island where there a small amount of large trees. Trees, wetland and other ecosystems make the oxygen we breathe, the water we drink and the rain for our crops. They provide habitat for native wildlife. They also store our carbon, which helps in the fight against climate change, and preventing devastating bushfires like the ones we saw this summer. In Australia our forests and woodlands are being cleared at unprecedented and alarming rates, we are one 11 global deforestation hotspots (one of the only countries from the developed world).

We need stronger laws to protect habitat NOW at both a state and local level.

New subdivisions should have to plant natives.

Suburban areas are not high bushfire risk areas, and thus should retain habitat. BMO was brought in for large bush properties to clean vegetation around from their houses.

I would also recommend funding more of the following programs:

- Gardens for Wildlife Program - <https://gardensforwildlifevictoria.com/>
- Landcare - <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/>
- Coastcare - <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/coastcare/>
- Local community nursery's like the Barb Martin Bushbank

Thank you for your time and opportunity to comment.

Kind regards,
Rachael Ferguson

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File1:

File2:

File3: