

From: Robyn Gillespie <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Monday, 31 August 2020 4:45 PM
To: ecosystems
Subject: Submission into the Inquiry into Ecosystems Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Dear committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Ecosystems Decline in Victoria.

Victoria's environmental laws should be the foundation for addressing ecosystem decline in the state which has been a steady and ongoing process since colonisation. Key contributing drivers include land clearing, impacts of urban expansion, over extraction of natural resources such as water and timber, and the introduction of invasive species. Further to this climate change is now amplifying these threats which makes addressing this issue much more urgent.

I'd like to share my thoughts on the matter.

The major driver of ecosystem decline is habitat loss due to human activity. All living creatures require food, water and shelter to survive and thrive. Many factors contribute to habitat loss all of which are human driven so therefore have a human solution.

Population growth.

As our population grows so do our cities. We require more land for housing but what we fail to see is that we are destroying the homes of our flora and fauna.

Clearing of land.

I recently saw a film clip of thousands of acres of forest being cleared for cattle. I have also visited farms where they are planting trees for shelter for cattle. (The farmer found this more viable because he got a better yield and price for the cattle. His soil water profile also improved) Wouldn't it make more sense to leave the trees in the first place. That way the habitat for all the other plants and animals is retained.

Invasive species.

We don't need to go beyond the devastation deer are doing to our environment at present, although horses are destroying the high country. Pigs, cats, foxes, fire ants the list goes on.

Just ask any environment group how much time and money they spend trying to undo some of the damage these do. Often a very rich diverse community of plants is replaced by a monoculture. E.g. vinca, boneseed, ivy, gorse, lantana, willows, again the list goes on.

The devastation caused by myrtle rust is obvious to anyone driving through north-west Tasmania

Climate Change.

Most noticeable in the bird community and marine environments. Some birds that may have been occasional visitors are now taking up residence. Birds are breeding earlier in the season. In the sea fish have migrated to places that were once too cold for them. Corals are bleaching. Kelp is dying.

Habitat fragmentation

When habitat is fragmented then animal numbers often become too low to breed. Animals are at huge risk of being a road fatality when they move from area to area. An example of this occurred in my street a number of years ago. It had been dry so the frogs had been hibernating. There was a massive downpour so the frogs all came out looking for mates. The next morning my grandchildren and I counted 100 dead frogs (4 different species) on 1 km of back road. Our frog population has still not recovered.

The drivers of ecosystem decline are obvious. It is what we do from now on that counts.

Recommendations

1. We need a moratorium on population growth and what a great opportunity we have now with Covid 19. We also need to stop all land clearing and look for better ways of utilising the land we have already cleared.
2. We already have stringent regulations on importation of many organisms but no new organisms to be imported.
3. Change the law so that it is illegal to sell environmental weeds. The small financial gain made by the nursery trade is tiny compared with the huge cost of removing these plants from the environment.
4. Put money into the Parks system so that they can tackle invasive species. Implement a system of early detection and removal of invasive species before they become a huge problem.
5. Implement an effective feral animal policy
6. Switch to renewable energy.
7. Education. We have an amazing resource with our natural world. We need to look after it so it can look after us. Most people have no idea about our natural world or how to take care of it. Unless we know about it we don't care. Everyday I see examples of this ignorance.

Boost ecosystem restoration. Nature protection laws alone will not be enough – our laws must also guide and encourage the restoration of Victoria's ecosystems. With climate change already having a terrible impact on Victorian flora and fauna, the challenge is urgent. Whether it be on public land or private land, our land management must be subject to appropriate obligations to ensure that ecological processes and natural assets are there for future generations to enjoy.

Strong nature protection laws will provide the backbone for a healthier future for Victoria's ecosystems, ensuring the people, places and wildlife we love can thrive for generations to come.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Gillespie

[REDACTED]

This email was sent by Robyn Gillespie via Do Gooder, a website that allows people to contact you regarding issues they consider important. In accordance with web protocol RFC 3834 we have set the FROM field of this email to our generic no-reply address at campaigns@good.do, however Robyn provided an email address [REDACTED] which we included in the REPLY-TO field.

Please reply to Robyn Gillespie at [REDACTED].

To learn more about Do Gooder visit

[https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dogooder.co%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cecosystems%40parliament.vic.gov.au%7C17a34db04b0d4d2f8e8008d84d7962c9%7C821af0ec31404137af0e6690286fb673%7C0%7C0%7C637344531060254861&msdata=WpkpfDE5cB0fV4aCTC5JH0neJyE%2B%2FAoib8G5cvoesKY%3D&reserved=0](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dogooder.co%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cecosystems%40parliament.vic.gov.au%7C17a34db04b0d4d2f8e8008d84d7962c9%7C821af0ec31404137af0e6690286fb673%7C0%7C0%7C637344531060254861&msdata=VzODhjITthxMLJ%2F%2Ftools.ietf.org%2Fhtml%2Frfc3834&data=02%7C01%7Cecosystems%40parliament.vic.gov.au%7C17a34db04b0d4d2f8e8008d84d7962c9%7C821af0ec31404137af0e6690286fb673%7C0%7C0%7C637344531060254861&msdata=WpkpfDE5cB0fV4aCTC5JH0neJyE%2B%2FAoib8G5cvoesKY%3D&reserved=0)

To learn more about web protocol RFC 3834 visit:

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftools.ietf.org%2Fhtml%2Frfc3834&data=02%7C01%7Cecosystems%40parliament.vic.gov.au%7C17a34db04b0d4d2f8e8008d84d7962c9%7C821af0ec31404137af0e6690286fb673%7C0%7C0%7C637344531060254861&msdata=VzODhjITthxMLJ%2F%2Ftools.ietf.org%2Fhtml%2Frfc3834&data=02%7C01%7Cecosystems%40parliament.vic.gov.au%7C17a34db04b0d4d2f8e8008d84d7962c9%7C821af0ec31404137af0e6690286fb673%7C0%7C0%7C637344531060254861&msdata=SVD2%2Bgc0XVY%3D&reserved=0>