

30th August 2020

Dear Committee,

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

I am making a submission as a member of the public because I'm deeply concerned about the declining health of Victoria's environment.

One of the objectives of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 is to identify and mitigate the impacts of potentially threatening processes to address the important underlying causes of biodiversity decline.

The number one threat is population growth.

The Victorian Biodiversity Strategy 2037 acknowledges as a key point that population growth and climate change are expected to exacerbate existing threats and bring new challenges for Victoria's biodiversity (page 9).

It is stated on page 10 that as the population continues to grow, the demands on land, waterways and marine ecosystems are resulting in diminished productivity from Victoria's environment, and on page 32 acknowledges that the environment has a finite capacity to recover from demands and disturbances.

Yet on page 46 it states that threats need to be better managed across the landscape to ensure that species and ecosystems are conserved, **and to give biodiversity the best chance to adapt to the effects of climate change and human population growth**. (page 46).

Perhaps this is the primary problem with current government policy – the belief that ecological systems will adapt to perpetual population growth in a way that will continue to support human existence and the web of life.

Does the government have evidence to support this? I have not seen any, in fact mostly the opposite that many scientists and organisations argue that the world's population has already exceeded the ecological limits, and that human consumption is vastly exceeding the capacity to regenerate.

For example,

- Sir David Attenborough – Patron of Population Matters
- World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice (BioScience • December 2017 / Vol. 67 No. 12) signed by more than 15,300 scientists worldwide
- CASSE Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy

Plan Melbourne 2017 is based on population projections and modelling taken from Victoria in Future.

There appears to be no analysis or assessment of this population modelling for its impact on the environment and ecological systems, just an act of faith that everything will be ok.

I would like to submit that Victoria has probably already reached it's maximum sustainable population-carrying capacity, and that further population growth is the key threat to our ecosystems.

Thank you for considering my submission,

Marion Attwater