



**From:** POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 August 2020 6:33 PM  
**To:** ecosystems  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

**Categories:** Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Mr Hugh Denton



**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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I would like to urge the committee to strongly consider measures

- Protecting threatened species
- Putting aside larger areas of the state for state reserves and national parks
- Robustly tackling feral plant and animal issues
- Address habitat fragmentation for native species
- Accelerate the transition away from logging native forests
- Develop fire management policies that are fit for purpose in an era of climate change
- Increase funding to Parks to alleviate further deterioration

Protecting threatened species - Suggested

1. Create action statements and management plans to guide and implement conservation action for all listed species and communities.
2. Making critical habitat determinations mandatory to enable the environment Minister to use habitat conservation orders in urgent conservation situations.
3. Ensure that public authorities are aware of their new duty to consider biodiversity conservation and the objectives of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.
4. Updating and strengthening the Biodiversity Strategy so that it relates to the objectives of the FFG Act and so that it incorporates the use of the legal conservation tools available under the Act.

Putting aside larger areas of the state for state reserves and national parks – Suggested

1. Make a decision on the proposals to create much needed 60,000 hectares of new national parks in Victoria's central west Wombat, Wellsford, Mount Cole and Pyrenees Forests to help better secure the future of threatened species such as the Greater Glider, Brush-tailed Phascogale and Mount Cole Grevillea.
2. There are still significant gaps in the reserve system which need to be filled and the government should initiate new Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Investigations or similar to fill those gaps, including underrepresented habitat areas, areas with high numbers of threatened species and areas under threat.

#### Robustly tackling feral plant and animal issues – Suggested

1. Adequately declare invasive pest animals and plants in legislation.
2. Specifically declare deer a pest species, and release a detailed state-wide deer control strategy.
3. Significantly expand funding and planning for control measures and mitigating impacts.

#### Address habitat fragmentation for native species - Suggested

1. Develop stronger native vegetation laws and regulations plus well-funded, and on-going strategic revegetation and land care programs.
2. Develop a detailed understanding on the implications of climate change on ecosystems, and a detailed assessment at fine-scale (e.g at least 5-kilometre blocks) should be undertaken to model in detail, the potential changes for key natural areas.
3. Dramatically increase funding for private land conservation through the Trust for Nature, including the establishment of \$20 million revolving fund.

#### Accelerate the transition away from logging native forests – Suggested

1. The transition of the native forest logging industry to plantation only timber production by 2030 to be brought forward.
2. Abandon the West Regional Forest Agreement and conduct a review of all Regional Forest Agreements in wake of the landscape-scale fire.
3. VicForests to stop using tax dollars to subsidize the logging and destruction of public native forests and threatened species habitat.
4. That the \$3.3 million grant that is due to expire this year for “Western Community Forestry”, should not be renewed to prop up the damaging logging industry in the region.

#### Develop fire management policies that are fit for purpose in an era of climate change – Suggested

- Ramping up of point of ignition control, including developing landscape-wide aerial firefighting capabilities to suppress ignition points in both urban and remote landscapes.
- Improved funding arrangements between the Federal and State governments in order to support aerial operational responses to wildfires in remote areas and to support the protection of environmental and cultural assets. Currently, federal funding is only available for aerial intervention if a fire is clearly threatening lives and infrastructure. This discourages critical point-of-ignition control in remote areas.
- The improvement of wildfire preparedness for citizens in towns and cities, including improved evacuation planning and procedures, and support for private bushfire shelters.
- Emphasis on strategic and regulated fuel reduction of understorey vegetation close to assets
- Evidence-based and strategically planned fuel reduction burn programs with follow up monitoring of post-fire regrowth and fuel loads.
- The incorporation of the ecological and associated flammability outcomes of planned burns and wildfires in different forest types into wildfire risk modelling.
- Reducing the long-term flammability of the landscape by setting targets to protect and promote the growth of older vegetation in those forest types where older growth is historically less flammable than younger post-fire growth.
- Protection of critical habitat features, such as (but not only) hollows in trees and coarse woody debris.

#### Increase funding to Parks to alleviate further deterioration – Suggested

1. A significant increase in funding (to at least 1% of state annual expenditure) be made, in addition to resources and expertise for habitat restoration programs and ecosystem management in national parks and conservation reserves.
2. Call for the Government to create new marine national parks and sanctuaries.
3. Significantly expand programs for ongoing biodiversity surveying and monitoring across Victoria’s various terrestrial, riparian, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems in national parks and reserves, as well as expanded support for citizen science programs.
4. Support community engagement, including ‘Friends’ groups to increase community connection to parks and reserves.
5. Create a state-wide ecosystem based marine spatial plan.

File1:

File2:

File3: