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From: POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>
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Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Ms Joslyn Tait
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Parliament's inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria. With an alarmingly large number of native flora, fauna and ecosystems under threat and increasing every day, we are at a critical juncture. This inquiry is an opportunity to develop cross-party support for effective solutions to restore Victoria's natural environment for the benefit of all Victorians, human and otherwise.

Victoria's biodiversity is not in a good state, and no wonder, when the overall environmental indicators as assessed in 2018 were so poor[1], and that was before the devastation wreaked by last summer's bushfires. No species can thrive in a disappearing and degraded environment.

Fortunately, it is not too late to attempt to restore some of our ecosystems and biodiversity. Programs are urgently needed to simultaneously reduce habitat destruction and actively restore habitats and threatened species. The former includes invasive species eradication, ending native forest logging, phasing out the mining and burning of fossil fuels, and preventing unnecessary land-clearing and development, while the latter includes tree planting, breeding programs, and purchasing private land for restoration. Programs like these will also provide much needed employment after the widespread job losses due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Underpinning all these programs must be strong environmental laws. I urge the committee members to give serious consideration to the potential for an Australian version of the approach taken by New Zealand, and which has since been adopted in other places, whereby legal personhood is conferred on particular ecosystems, such as rivers, forests and mountains and indigenous custodians act as their legal guardians. Focussing on the rights of natural systems would help to increase our sense of responsibility towards them. It is only by seeing ecosystems as deserving of protection rather than exploitation that we have any hope of reversing the current trend of environmental destruction.

I look forward to the results of the committee's work and a positive future for Victoria's ecosystems.

Yours faithfully,
Joslyn Tait

[1] Victorian State of the Environment 2018 Report, <https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/reports/state-environment-2018/all-indicators>

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File1:

File2:

File3: