

From: Fern Cadman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 31 August 2020 9:27 PM
To: ecosystems
Subject: Submission to ecosystem inquiry

Categories: Submissions

Dear Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this incredibly important inquiry.

I have lived in Victoria for almost 10 years and have been privileged in that time to have enjoyed many of Victoria's special places.

My husband and I spent our honeymoon walking at Wilson's Promontory National Park and we returned there again a few years later to camp with our 1 year old baby - who loved the beach so much!

I've visited the stunning scenery around Hamilton, the beautiful forests of the central highlands, the beaches of the great ocean road. I've camped from the Otways to Orbust, and even in my home city of Melbourne, nature is all around - whether it's the peregrine falcons in the CBD or critically endangered swift parrots dropping in to Royal Park.

Here in Victoria, we are so blessed to have spectacular landscapes, amazing wildlife and so many beautiful places. And while nature is often viewed as 'nice to have' or 'fun to visit', a healthy environment is essential for our own survival. Nature provides our food, our water, the air we breathe and the basis for our homes, clothes, art and happiness.

Yet all around me I see the failure of our government to look after the environment on which we depend. Each day there is more news of species on the brink, ecosystems disappearing and the steady decline of the world around us.

Last year I visited logged forests near Toolangi - a word that literally means tall trees in the language of the local Aboriginal people. From a backpack on my back, my then 3 year old daughter said to me "where will all the animals live now the trees have been cut down mum?"

How do I explain to a three year old that these forests were decimated - animals killed and landscapes destroyed - so that a multinational companies can profit making paper from ancient, carbon rich trees? Or that our Victorian Government - whether it's Liberal or Labor - lets this happen because they are captured by people and groups motivated by self interest and greed?

What will human lives be worth when our air and water is dirty and our fellow creatures are gone? This is certainly not the future I want for my daughter.

That is why I urgently call on all of you on this committee to start putting the health of our planet above the vested interests of industries like logging, mining and fossil fuels. I urge you to really take action to address climate change - to urgently phase out coal and gas, immediately protect our forests for their carbon and get on with the job of decarbonising our transport instead of building new toll roads.

The great news that I hope all members of this committee will champion is that actions to protect and restore our environment and tackle climate change can also create meaningful jobs and careers. They can be jobs planting trees, caring for animals, restoring creeks and rivers.

It's time to throw away the fallacy that never ending growth based on extraction and exploitation of a finite planet makes sense, and to instead create a future where people lead good lives in thriving communities surrounded by the places and creatures that make life worth living.

Thank you

Fern Cadman
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I am happy for submission to be made public.