

[REDACTED]

From: Susie Hearder [REDACTED]
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To: ecosystems
Subject: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Categories: Submissions

Please find below my submission to the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria.

I agree to my submission being published.

Thankyou,
Ms. Susie Hearder

[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION

We are living amidst the sixth greatest mass extinction event and here in Australia we have the distinction of being one of the worst performing countries when it comes to extinction, with the highest mammal extinction on record.

We know that habitat loss mostly via deforestation is a leading cause of extinction and biodiversity loss. And the leading cause of deforestation on the east coast of Australia is clearing for animal agriculture. On all the farmlands where cows and sheep now graze once stood a natural ecosystem which provided habitat for all the interconnecting biodiverse species.

Animal agriculture apart from causing deforestation is a huge contributor to climate change, with its methane emissions, and to pollution as well as being water intensive. Add to that barbed wire criss-crossing the landscape and our wildlife are really in trouble.

The Victorian Government must recognise the significant contribution made by animal agriculture towards ecosystem decline.

The Victorian Government must give incentives to farmers who are currently engaged in animal agriculture to help them transition to more sustainable farming such as farming crops. With a transition to farming crops less land will be needed for agriculture and some land can be re forested for wildlife.

There is no doubt that climate change will increase extinctions with global warming, droughts, scarcity of water, sea level rising, fires and other severe weather events. Iconic Australian animals such as koalas are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The Victorian Government must acknowledge that all species are interconnected and all to some degree will be affected by climate change. All legislation pertaining to species extinction and biodiversity loss must factor in climate change.

This subsequent loss of Biodiversity also means a general loss of nature and its inherent values not only for the species that are affected but for people in the Victorian community as well. The important value of fresh air, clean water and healthy soils cannot be underestimated for our own survival but it goes further than our physical needs, for getting out in nature and seeing the delights of our Australian Bush and its wildlife inhabitants is also important to our mental wellbeing and to our souls. Victoria must invest in nature conservation by increasing National Parks and public reserves but also by giving real incentives to private landowners to protect biodiversity on private land.

With 17 endangered bird species in Victoria it is beyond high time that so-called sporting events such as duck hunting be banned as it has been in other states. Our native birds are diminishing and it is unconscionable that the

Victorian Government allows this barbaric sport to continue when it is known that native species also get wounded and killed in the killing fields of the duck-hunting season..

The other insanity is the killing of our apex predator the dingo. The complexity of species interacting with each other and whole ecosystems must be viewed as a whole and protected and not with individual species treated in isolation. The dingo performs an important function in keeping some other introduced species in check. When toxic 1080 poison is put out into the environment Dingoes and many off-target species including wildlife are killed by a particularly cruel, barbaric and lingering death.

No living sentient being should be treated in this manner. 1080 needs to be banned and only non-lethal methods of animal control used to curb introduced species. But the dingo should be protected and revered as our apex predator.

Dingoes and also kangaroos are being unjustly targeted with killing in the most barbaric ways. The commercial harvest (killing) of our native kangaroos must stop as should the rampant killing by landowners of any of our wildlife. We have a biodiversity emergency and by killing our iconic wildlife in any shape or form, whether it be by logging, land-clearing, mining, development or highway construction we must place a priority on protecting our wildlife and their habitat which is their safe-haven.

Logging of all native forests on both public and private land must cease.

All koala habitat must be protected and development such as mining, agriculture and urban expansion must work around our wildlife. There should be no offsetting for wildlife or endangered species habitat.

Our pollinators such as bees and bats must also be given high priority in protecting their habitat. Waterways and creeks need more protection from harmful logging, clearing and sediment runoff.

Waterways are important wildlife corridors and all wildlife corridors need to be mapped and protected. Where there are gaps in vegetation it is imperative that native vegetation is planted and restored so that there are climate corridors and means for our wildlife to cross the landscape.

More funds must be given to local Government for ecological surveys, mapping and protection of ecosystems and endangered species habitat.

It is essential that overfishing must be addressed locally as well as federally to keep our marine systems healthy.

Freshwater catchments must be protected and water flows left for environmental values not just for human consumption. We must start realising that our mother earth and all her other inhabitants are not just one great resource for our one greedy species which is no doubt the greatest pest species that exists.

There must be more funding for ecological surveys to have a real grasp of the need for protecting ecosystems.

We must pay homage to our indigenous heritage and introduce more indigenous strategies to conserve our natural ecosystems and this includes practices for burning the landscape with cool burns.

There must be more wildlife corridors provided by way of underpasses, and overpasses and also fencing to protect wildlife where roads and highways dissect their habitat. This must be done with all future road building and also retrospectively.

Education is key to ensuring that present and future generations appreciate and value our wildlife and biodiversity.

Full funding should also be given to all wildlife rescue organisations and wildlife hospitals.

Thankyou for allowing me to contribute to this submission process.