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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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The state of our shared environment including diverse and unique biodiversity and ecosystems is in tatters and progressively worsening. This is fact and has been evidenced ongoing. Despite this, governments across Australia at Local, State/Territory and Commonwealth levels continue to work independently for their own political and economic ends rather than collectively and in collaboration for a shared outcome, we and our shared environment can all benefit from.

One of the key findings in the Interim report for the current 10 year review of the EPBC Act is the abundance of evidence that the EPBC Act continues to fail our environment and all who depend on her, notably the escalation of endangered, threatened and extinct fauna and flora, water courses and groundwater devastation, rising temperatures and increased weather events and catastrophic conditions and consequences. The 2019/20 summer bushfires alone have killed around 3 billion non-human animals, while other human caused consequences continue to impact and destroy on the current trajectory which all tiers of government have failed to address in any meaningful way.

Legislative duplication and conflicts are in abundance and always the environment comes a poor second to political and economic priorities. Many "protected" native species can be and are regularly trapped, shot and poisoned in the most horrific routine manner as "pests" because the priority of a minority and political and economic agendas. Worse still this ongoing devastation is undertaken based on a culture of culling which has proven to be ineffective and inhumane.

The Victorian government can lay no claim on environmental progression when it continues to allow the direct slaughter and wanton and intentional harm of kangaroos, dingoes, and ducks for pet food, or under the false guise of sport and entertainment. Similarly the human habitat of classifying some species as "pests" ensuring different inhumane treatment personifies the human culture of short sighted political and economic will which has no foundation in science or the truest sense of ecology as it should apply to Australia. The environmental damage caused by hard hooved species apply equally to the original prehistoric ancestors of the native kangaroo.

The Victorian government appears to have no understanding of balance and coexistence or the concept of re-wilding. Instead legislators and government policy direction continues to determine species according to a dominant thought process which is pitting species against species where political and economic factors determine the outcome.

Animal agriculture, mining, fossil fuels and logging are key drivers of biodiversity loss and environmental devastation and yet government continues to support these unsustainable practices which lead to heavy pollution, extraction of precious resources like water and environment which is key species habitat for so many.

We know the global world is in the 6th mass species extinction. This is being driven by human beings.

Globally, biodiversity is under intense stress and pressure, causing a losses now deemed a Biodiversity Emergency. This is recognised and reported by scientists around the world and by leading global organisations such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

These threats to nature and decline in biodiversity are increasingly evident in Victoria. The 2018 State of the Environment Report from Victoria's Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability was damning. The status of 60% of the Biodiversity Indicators are rated as "poor" and none are rated as "good"; in terms of trends, 51% of the Biodiversity Indicators are deteriorating and only 1 out of 35 had improved and that is Private Land Conservation.

The main drivers of biodiversity loss include over-exploitation and excessive land clearing, and use of dwindling resources like water and groundwater, animal agriculture, fossil fuels, mining, transport and pollution, all which are leading to excessive habitat loss and climate damage. To prevent further biodiversity loss and ecosystem decline and to protect and restore species and ecosystems, we must tackle these factors. Exploitation, disregard and disrespect of animals founded on greed and economics is the major contributor to all drivers of biodiversity loss.

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