

Meredith Ramadan

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There are many areas across Victoria that will benefit from this review of the way we; the Government and the community, take responsibility for addressing the deterioration of our Victorian ecosystems. Areas such as the high country and western plains to the wetlands of Crib Point all require attention and whilst I am passionate about these areas the Mornington Peninsula is my home and the focus of my submission

It is clear from the 2018 State of the Environment report that there has been a significant decline in most biodiversity indicators and immediate attention towards restoration is required. This decline is due to some legacy issues while others are new initiatives that exacerbate habitat loss and degradation. There has been an increasing trend in the number of critically endangered and vulnerable vertebrate groups, specifically reptiles, and an increase in the number of endangered vertebrates. Of the known species, those that are threatened include: 22% terrestrial mammals, 19% birds, 30% reptiles and 43% amphibians.

As an active member of our local Landcare community who care for public land and local landscapes I am passionate about our native plants and animals. My particular focus is on the Arthurs Seat State Park. This unique natural resource used extensively by the local community and is a popular tourist destination.

Arthurs Seat State Park has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the state. It features numerous animal and plant species which are classified as "rare", "threatened" or "endangered" and so protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

A 2011 Fauna Survey of the Arthurs Seat Escarpment records five threatened species as listed in the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act: Lewin's Rail, the White Bellied Sea Eagle, the Powerful Owl, Koala and the Southern Brown Bandicoot (presumed extinct in the park by the 2011 survey, but has in fact been spotted, albeit rarely). A further 32 species are considered to be of regional significance and 11 species recorded are of high local significance.

The following issues have a significant impact across the Mornington Peninsula;

- Habitat fragmentation prevents free movement of wildlife across the Peninsula. The work undertaken by Mornington Peninsula Landscape (LMPL) aims to reconnect fragmented remnants of indigenous vegetation to create wildlife corridors (biolinks) on the Mornington Peninsula but the initiative is inadequately resourced and is not embraced by all local land holders. In particular the The Ross Trust who own and operate the Hill View quarry in Dromana and are proposing a new quarry in Red Hill

propose an unacceptable risk to the local ecosystems and separate three sections of the Arthurs Seat State Park.

- Invasive animals – such as feral rabbits, cats and foxes also pose a risk to native animals and birds
- Invasive plants – such Sweet Pittosporum, Monterey Pine, Spear Thistle, Gourse, Karamu
- Inadequate public resources for ecosystem management – increased investment needed as we are still going backwards.

I ask the Inquiry to recommend that the Victorian Government:

- Stop the extension of the Hill View Quarry on Arthurs Seat escarpment.
- Develop stronger native vegetation laws and regulations plus well-funded, and on-going strategic revegetation and land care programs.
- 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.
- Dramatically increase funding for private land conservation through the Trust for Nature, including the establishment of \$20 million revolving fund.

Sincerely,
Meredith Ramadan