

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into ecosystem decline here in Victoria.

I had a carefree childhood, one in which I spent a lot of time out in nature and nature was everywhere - life was everywhere. There were interesting insects, beetles, and butterflies in our suburban backyard, frogs could always be found around the dams at the farm, and our car would be covered in insects from the drive there and back in the South Western district. The weather was more predictable and we felt safe on our camping holidays.

As an adult, I notice that my children don't discover nearly as many insects, and not many types, in our backyard, the frogs have long gone from the farm, and barely any insects end up on our car on the drive. We are too afraid to venture too far into the forests in summer. The changes to our natural world are coming more quickly, and the loss of life is speeding up. I am so sad. What future will my children have?

There are so many ways the government can have a strong, positive impact on my children's future and the future of all species. For example, given that Victoria is the most cleared state in Australia (66% of our land has been cleared of native trees, shrubs and plants, the habitat that supports our native wildlife) ceasing to log our native forests immediately (not in ten years) and moving to plantation timber is crucial.

I also implore our government to:

- Phase out coal and gas burning, which is making the climate crisis worse and driving devastating extreme events like heat waves, fires and floods
- Stop destructive and unnecessary development like the Western Highway Duplication and the proposed Westernport gas ship terminal which continue to bit-by-bit erode the health of Victoria's environment for corporate profits.
- Change the laws that allow wildlife to be killed, and grasslands and other habitat to be cleared, with little to no ramifications.
- Create thousands of jobs in industries that support and improve our environment, like planting trees, removing invasive weeds, managing feral animals, protecting endangered species, increasing biodiversity through land management, and much more.

All those in parliament are in the very privileged and powerful position to be able to shape the future, so I hope with all my heart that all levels of government, and all elected representatives, do everything in their power to address our ecological and climate emergency with the urgency it requires. There are so many ways - and they all need to be done.

Sincerely,
Nerida Thompson

**I am happy to make my submission public, but not my contact details*



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(she/her) Why have I included my preferred pronouns? See [here](#)

I acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, on whose lands I live and work. I pay respects to their elders who cared for these lands with deep respect and intricate knowledge for tens of thousands of years, and I pay my respects to current and future elders, as they continue the cultures and care for the land. These lands were never ceded.