

How to make a great submission to the Victorian Extinction Inquiry

EXTINCTION INQUIRY KICKS OFF!

Last year, the Victorian Greens successfully campaigned to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into tackling the extinction crisis. We're excited that it's now underway.

This inquiry is a critical opportunity to shine a light on the state of Victoria's environment, and to build support from all political parties for real and effective solutions to restore Victoria's environment and threatened species.

WHY IS THIS EXTINCTION INQUIRY IMPORTANT?

Parliamentary Inquiries have a proven track record of getting results in Victoria. Last year, the Greens initiated an inquiry into the waste crisis, and it led to the Victorian Government announcing a 'cash for cans' scheme in Victoria and more money for recycling. Our Greens inquiry into electric vehicles led to trials of electric buses in Melbourne. Together, we can ensure this extinction inquiry also delivers real results.

HOW YOU CAN TAKE PART:

The first stage in a Parliamentary Inquiry is a call for submissions. The word 'submission' can be a bit daunting, but writing one doesn't have to be. Think of it more as a letter. It's a chance to share what you love about Victoria's special places and creatures, and how you want to see them protected.

Making a submission to the inquiry is a powerful way for you to tell your MPs that stopping extinction is their responsibility, and the Government needs to do more.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION

Groups like the Greens, GetUp or Greenpeace often help people to write submissions by pre-writing a letter that you can send off with the click of a button. Submissions for this inquiry will be a little different.

We're asking you to open up a new document, or a new email, write your own letter, and send it to ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au (please also bcc office@ellensandell.com).

You'll need to include:

- Your full name
- Contact details (either a postal address or phone number)
- The text of your submission - either in an email or an attached document.
- Whether you want your submission to be confidential or public (but note your contact details won't be made public)

We know doing a submission this way is more work, but it's really important and it will be worth it!

From our experience with inquiries like this one, we've learned that MPs do not give the same weight to pre-written submissions.

That's why it's critical for you to write your own, so MPs receive as many unique and authentic submissions as possible.

However, please don't think your submission needs to be long or thoroughly researched (but feel free if it's your thing). **Even just a few paragraphs, personally and poignantly written, will have a big impact.**

The inquiry will also receive submissions from scientists, organisations and experts with specialist knowledge, so don't feel like you have to know everything or have all the answers.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch on office@ellensandell.com or (03) 9328 4637.

You can also visit the Parliament of Victoria website [here](#) for more information.

TIPS FOR WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SUBMISSION

We're working to make sure this inquiry does two things:

1. shines a light on the poor state of environmental care in Victoria, and
2. makes strong recommendations to stop extinction, and restore a thriving environment that supports healthy communities and our wildlife.

Your submission will play a powerful role in communicating this story.

We've provided the following to help, which are outlined in more detail below:

- Thought-provoking ideas to make your submission personal and powerful
- Information about the state of Victoria's environment
- Suggestions for the types of solutions that will make a real difference

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION PERSONAL AND POWERFUL

Share your memories, experiences and hopes for places and creatures you love in Victoria

Does your family have a camping tradition? Do you have a special city nature park you love? Are you an avid surfer? Or bushwalker? Have you got children, or nieces and nephews, that you want to take places and go bird watching with?

What is your favourite national park and why? Is it the amazing rock formations in Gariwald/the Grampians?

Share your ideas on what Victoria can do to save our species and their homes for generations to come, based on your own experience

Do you have ideas from your own professional experience, research or community about what needs to be done to care for Victoria's places, plants and wildlife?

Would you like to see new regional jobs monitoring wildlife - work that is currently done by volunteers?

Have you noticed that invasive plants and animals are a growing problem that needs more management?

These are just ideas to get you thinking.

They are to inspire you to share what you know and want, **from your personal and local perspectives**, so that the Victorian Government can make a positive difference with the right funding, policies and commitment.

WHERE IS VICTORIA'S ENVIRONMENT AT?

Even before this summer's terrible fires, there's growing and alarming evidence that our state's natural wonders are in trouble.

Here are some facts:

- 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
- Over 700 native plants, animals, insects and beautiful ecosystems are under threat, with this number growing every day
- 120 Victorian animals, birds, plants, insects and fish are now at the brink of extinction
- More than 70 threatened species make their home in forests that are still being logged

Tragically, this summer's fires have dramatically worsened the outlook for the places and creatures that make Victoria such an amazing place. The scale, severity and destruction of these fires was unprecedented.

The fires:

- Burned 1.4 million hectares, just in Victoria
- Destroyed more than 50% of the habitat for 185 rare and threatened Victorian animals, plants and other creatures
- Pushed already critically endangered species like the greater glider, smoky mouse, mountain ash eucalyptus and many others perilously close to extinction.

If you'd like further information about the current health of Victoria's environment, you can view Victoria's 2018 State of the Environment Report [here](#).

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS THAT CAN STOP THE EXTINCTION CRISIS?

The good news is that there are many solutions that can restore habitat and wildlife. Even better, these solutions are absolutely achievable and will be successful with the right commitment and funding from governments.

Right now, as we come to grips with the economic fallout from COVID-19, it's a perfect time for governments to spend public money and create jobs looking after people and the environment.

1. A huge program of weed and invasive species eradication

Victoria is overrun by weeds and invasive animals, which kill and out-compete our native plants and wildlife. It's a big job to manage them, but it's critical for restoring habitat.

We could create thousands of jobs clearing weeds out of rivers, creeks, farmland and national parks, and humanely managing introduced animals like cats, deer, rabbits and foxes.

2. A tree-planting workforce to restore habitat

67% of Victoria's trees, mangroves, shrubs, and other plants have been cleared since colonisation. Much of what's left is in poor health. We could create thousands of jobs

in both the city and the country, replanting trees and vegetation in our parks, streets, rivers and creeks right across our state, but especially in bushfire-affected areas. We could also help landowners plant native vegetation on their land.

3. A dedicated program for reviving species facing extinction

The work of rescuing Victoria's more than 120 species at risk of extinction deserves and needs a dedicated program of funding. NSW has committed \$100 million to a 'Save Our Species' program, which systematically identifies risks to species and goes about addressing them. It also includes action like breeding programs so healthy populations of animals, birds and plants can be restored. Victoria has nothing like this program and spends almost no money on this type of dedicated species recovery work. We also spend very little money on research for our scientists to study new solutions to the extinction crisis. It's time that changed.

4. An end to habitat destruction and strengthened nature laws

We cannot hope to stop extinction unless we stop the destructive activities that are driving it. We need to:

- End native forest logging and transition to a plantation based timber industry
- 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.

THANK YOU!

Thanks for taking the time to make a submission, and don't forget to BCC us!