

To Whom It May Concern,

This 'Land and Biodiversity Whitepaper' is an excellent opportunity for me to have my say. Thank you. Firstly, I suggest that all forms of land clearing end now. This needs to be legislated, enforced and those found guilty of this crime should face a maximum penalty of \$50,000. Seeing as 78% of Victoria's bushland is threatened by the rapidly encroaching urban sprawl of Melbourne and Geelong, whilst 75% of our waterways are reaching a critical point of degradation, it would make sense that action is taken.

Firstly, I would like to see a protection of threatened habitats near or in the vicinity of Melbourne's urban fringe. Thanks to short-sighted planning and a reliance on cars (something which the State Government seems incapable of doing anything about), these habitats are perhaps the most threatened. It is an imperative that such areas are protected under national park status. Such areas include the Upper Merri, Plenty and Kororoit creeks and the Werribee and Patterson rivers. These habitats have been slowly nurtured by devoted volunteers, but lack the ecological protection areas such as the Great Alpine National Park have. This must be changed so that these waterways and their associated catchments are fully protected and looked after. I understand that money from the state budget has been allocated to funding more park rangers and this will compliment any new parkland allocated (as I have suggested).

Logging of native old-growth forest must stop. The call for for the immediate cessation of logging operations has been very strong, but has not been acknowledged by either state or federal governments. In my view, sufficient political pressure (irrespective of the also present scientific facts) has been exerted to stop logging immediately - yet unfortunately, logging is as persistent as ever. It is unfair for both loggers, the environment and our future water supplies for this to continue. It is not a sustainable industry, but can be substituted by having plantation forest (on farmland), so long as it only on farmland and not, say, in a forest (such as the Strezlecki ranges). The scientific evidence, as you are no doubt aware, has also proven the invasive and harmful effects that effect forests (especially those in a Climax Community). My call for logging to be stopped is echoed by a significant proportion of the population - I think you'll find.

Ongoing reforestation projects (such as the ones carried out by Greening Australia) should be funded accordingly by both state and federal governments. The areas of land which had experienced severe and damaging deforestation during the last century must be set aside as public land - and revegetated. New forests that are biodiverse (no monocultures please!) would set a new ecological landmark for Victoria as well as provide a much-needed carbon sink. New habitats for the one third of Victorian natives which are nearing extinction is essential.

So, I've laid out my arguments, many of which are supported by both environmental groups and much of the population. I urge all the bureaucratic minds behind this whitepaper to implement the suggested range of projects and initiatives that will bring forth a positive contribution to the biodiversity which has so blatantly been ignored in the last century.

Thank you,

Reuben van Bommel
Year 11

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Reuben van Bommel-Misrachi
reubenvbm@speedpost.net

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<http://www.fastmail.fm> - Same, same, but different...