

SUBMISSION TOWARDS LAND AND BIODIVERSITY WHITE PAPER

I am writing this submission due to the serious concerns I have about the current state of Victoria's natural environment, let alone those threats to our biological heritage which are accruing from continued population growth, potential and actual climate change, and an associated lack of political will from governance with regard to the protection of our natural heritage.

According to the CSIRO, Victoria is already the State most cleared of its natural habitats. The National Land and Water Resources Audit, 2003, concluded that North-West Victoria had the greatest number of threatened species in a given area. Some 36 Victorian mammals are considered threatened under the guidelines given by the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. The Climate Action Network Australia considers 13 more are at risk from climate change. Many of our plant species are also at risk.

Large scale habitat clearance (and an associated lack of bio-corridors to connect various remnant areas) has not been confined to any one type of ecosystem. Wetlands, woodlands, forests, and native grasslands have all been attacked and destroyed. Whether plant species such as river red gums or the basalt plain grasses are examined, or animal species like the numerous bird types at risk, Victoria has neglected to save sufficient habitat areas to protect and maintain its biodiversity even before the dangers of factors like climate change were recognised. One has only to look at the devastation caused by large-scale logging to see the lack of any adequate protection for our natural heritage. Biodiversity is simply not considered important enough by the Victorian Government, yet humans are themselves a biological species and we may also pay a heavy price for not giving environmental factors the importance they should have. Even our roadside reserves are being affected by the demand for cheap firewood (as are our forests and woodlands).

I have not made this submission either a long or research-referenced one. The time for such a submission to be made shall be later on. However it is time to recognise NOW the current declining state of Victoria's biodiversity and the future threats which must be catered for.