

Office of Climate Change- Department of Premier and Cabinet

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Hello my name is Alexis Simmonds,

I wanted to draw to your attention to the fact that recently there has been more research made available by the CSIRO predicting that Victoria will become drier and warmer than previously expected. (CSIRO, 2008) Not only from familiar climate change issues such as the burning of fossil fuels and transport. Victoria would also face becoming drier and warmer from contributions that would be made if Victoria's old growth and native forests that contain 'green carbon' were continued to be further logged. This would occur if the green carbon in these storage systems were released by means of degradation and deforestation. Without these old growth and native forests, carbon would be released into the Earth's atmosphere further contributing to Greenhouse emissions.

We need to be able to store carbon in these carbon banks that have been in our Earth for centuries. There are thousands of years of history and heritage in every square hectare of bio-diversity in our forests, we need to act now to preserve this time capsule. There is now even more evidence from scientific research to suggest that carbon is stored not only in trees. It is also stored in their roots, surrounding soil and even charcoal left from natural occurring fires. So degradation and deforestation of Victoria's old growth forests would mean 40-60% of carbon from this large eco system lost into the Earth's atmosphere. (CSIRO, 2008) Not to mention loss of habitats for all forms of wildlife.

Shouldn't we as Australian's be proud that we have such a large carbon density of forests right here in Victoria? Why are we even considering to steal this heritage from our past, present and future generations? Surely we need to reconsider the affect this will leave on a global scale? I think we need to protect our gigantic time capsule of how Australia's traditional owners viewed the natural world; by doing so we can also help to protect our planet from it's continuous global warming. We as Australians and global citizens need to acknowledge that we have a gigantic lung system of our global community in our own backyard!

I do not think it is appropriate to substitute our intricate native forest eco systems with brown carbon forests that is; plantations & industrial forests. I do not see that these types

of forests are suited to our Australian climate or provide appropriate food sources for our indigenous wild life. Do we want to be known as Australia the country that grows quickly grown timber that bows and warps, or turns their old growth forests into tan bark and paper? Or do we want to be Australia the country that leads the world in environmental sustainability?

In Australia we have 1.5 million hectares of plantations for wood and paper resources, so we don't need to log our old growth & native forests. (Brown, B 2008) We need to look at clever solutions that are more adaptable to our Australian climate, and work with the land not against it. We need to acknowledge Australian scientists and employ our scientists to develop alternatives to degradation and deforestation of our forests for paper & wood products. As custodians of our indigenous heritage forests we need to slow down all green and brown carbon farming life cycles. I believe that clear felling, burning and poisoning our native forests is not the answer for now and future generations. (Brown, B 2008) Please listen to the scientists that are researching and discovering these truths.

When I have talked with Murrundindi he has mentioned to me that the Wurrundjeri people's language is a dying one please don't let our indigenous old growth forests die! 'We all share this land, and we are all part of it just as we are all part of the dreaming.' (Murrundindi, 2006)

Please acknowledge that any policy that you choose will insure the protection of our heritage forests. I feel that we owe it to our original custodians of our land, the Wurrundjeri people, our wild life, our forests and future generations both globally and locally! As Murrundindi, (Wurrundjeri Elder from Healsville) said to me; 'Wurrundjeri people don't say goodbye, we say Trigganin! Which means, I'll go but I'll come back', (Murrundindi, 2006) I do not agree that our old growth forests would come back if we said goodbye to them, or that we need to harm our Victorian indigenous forests.

We need to protect them.

Yours faithfully,

Alexis Simmonds

'Trigganin'

References:

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