

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Melbourne—Tuesday, 23 February 2021

MEMBERS

Ms Sonja Terpstra—Chair

Mr Clifford Hayes—Deputy Chair

Dr Matthew Bach

Ms Melina Bath

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Ms Georgie Crozier

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Dr Tien Kieu

Mrs Beverley McArthur

Mr Tim Quilty

WITNESS

Ms Anna Murphy, Director and Head of Flora Ecology, Threatened Species Conservancy.

The CHAIR: I declare open the Environment and Planning Committee public hearing for the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria. Please ensure that mobile phones have been switched to silent and that background noise is minimised.

I would like to begin this hearing by respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the various lands which each of us are gathered on today and pay my respects to their ancestors, elders and families. I particularly welcome any elders or community members who are here today to impart their knowledge of this issue to the committee or who are watching the broadcast of these proceedings.

With that, I will just quickly introduce my colleagues who are participating in the hearing today and just to go around the table. I also thank those who have provided any apologies. Of course my name is Sonja Terpstra. I am a Member for the Eastern Metropolitan Region and I am the Chair of this committee, so welcome. Also I have here Cliff Hayes, further down the table is Melina Bath—

Ms BATH: Hello.

The CHAIR: Dr Matthew Bach at the end of the table there, and I was going to say Dr Andy Meddick, but no, Andy Meddick at the end of the table there—

Mr MEDDICK: Not anymore.

The CHAIR: and of course Dr Ratnam here to my left.

All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during the hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things outside, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament. All evidence is being recorded, and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee website. All right.

With that, with all the formalities out of the way, we will get underway. And thank you, Anna, for coming. If you could please state your name and organisation one at a time so that we can verify the identity—or actually you are not Zooming in; you are here in person, which is wonderful. And yes, so if you would just like to state your organisation and name, and with that we will get underway.

Ms MURPHY: Okay. My name is Anna Murphy, and I am from the Threatened Species Conservancy.

The CHAIR: Welcome. All right. Well, thank you very much for your submission to this inquiry. What I might do is just quickly open up with a question myself, and then I will go around the table—and if we have enough time we will go around and do a second one. Can you briefly describe the programs that your organisation does and runs and what role it plays in the whole scheme of things?

Ms MURPHY: Yes. I am the co-founder and Director of the Threatened Species Conservancy. We are threatened species ecologists. We are specialists in saving plants and animals from extinction. We work through a strategic process to develop recovery strategies for individual threatened species and then we implement them. We source our funding through a wide range of areas—from philanthropy to government grants to donations, corporate donations. We do a little bit of contracting work around threatened species issues. I guess one of the things I should say is we are different from other not-for-profit organisations in that we look at the entire species across its range. We are trying to address the extinction of threatened species in a number of different geographical areas.

The CHAIR: Fantastic. All right. Thank you. If you would like to make an opening statement.

Ms MURPHY: Sure. Okay, great. All right. Cue the first slide. Thanks.

Visual presentation.

Ms MURPHY: Thanks for inviting me to be part of this dialogue and inviting the Threatened Species Conservancy to be part of this dialogue around ecosystem decline. As I said before, we are a not-for-profit organisation and we are the only not-for-profit organisation in Australia that is working to protect the nation's threatened species. We are not tenure bound, so we do not work on isolated properties; we work across the entire ranges of species. Consequently, we collaborate widely with a range of stakeholders, from First Nations peoples, scientists and governments to communities, to design and implement threatened species recovery programs.

Next slide—I am just going to put our recommendations straight up here. I will refer to them throughout my talk, but I will come back to them at the end for your reference. They are:

1. That the Victorian Government funds a comprehensive, State-wide threatened species recovery program.
2. That, in the absence of a Victorian Government run threatened species recovery program, a program is funded to be run by an independent non-government body.
3. That Zoos Victoria, the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and the research sector are adequately funded to run and maintain *ex-situ* conservation programs and research.
4. That funding for the recovery of Victoria's threatened species is ongoing to address Victoria's extinction crisis into the long term.

As Victorians, we cherish our natural landscapes and we know how unique our threatened species are. There are many threatened species that occur in only one place in Victoria in the entire world. There are at least 2423 species that are threatened with extinction. Around 10 animal and 43 plant species are presumed extinct, and many more have become regionally extinct or extinct in the wild.

Next slide, please. The 2019–20 bushfires devastated the nation's wildlife, as we heard before, killing a billion animals and threatening hundreds of plants and numerous ecological communities. These losses are catastrophic, yet this situation will only worsen as Australia heads further into climate breakdown. There has never been a more critical time than now to invest in threatened species recovery programs in Victoria.

This slide should take you through a range of threatened species. For some reason it is not displaying properly. The slides that should be showing are of threatened species in Victoria that are at imminent risk of extinction, and the first slide was the stick-nest rat, which is actually now extinct in Victoria and indeed in Australia. We will never see that species again. There are other species like the beautiful mountain swainson-pea, which is a gorgeous purple pea that is now pretty much extinct in Victoria. It is still surviving in New South Wales thanks to the work that the New South Wales government has been doing.

We run a range of threatened species programs, and this is one example of one of our volunteers working to save this species from extinction. This is a pink-tailed worm-lizard. It occurs in only one region in Victoria. It is very poorly understood. On the urban-rural fringe of a town in central Victoria it is highly, highly threatened, so we are pretty much the only people in Australia and in Victoria working on this species.

I guess I want you to imagine what the outcome for threatened species would have been if, instead of the endless round of government cutbacks that cancelled threatened species programs run by DELWP, we had actually had well-funded programs run by skilled threatened species experts. It is great that there are still a small number of programs that operate through the zoo and the botanic gardens for some of the state's iconic species, such as our faunal emblems, but there has been little support for the recovery of most of Victoria's non-iconic species, which has left a raft of species to languish and potentially go extinct in the future. Imagine if, instead of watching these beautiful species go extinct, we had actually funded a threatened species program and saw them thrive.

I do not want to go over the devastating effect that the endless rounds of government cutbacks to threatened species programs have had on threatened species in Victoria. I think the figure of 2423 threatened species speaks for itself; however, I think it is important to note that, even while funded, threatened species recovery programs in Victoria would have been far more effective if they had had centralised coordination and adequate budgets to deliver effective on-ground works. Today the Victorian government invests substantial energy and resources into policy development, information systems, species prioritisation tools, reporting databases and

spatial modelling to improve the allocation of resources and the delivery of biodiversity conservation. Yet for threatened species this investment has not been matched to deliver programs that lead to on-ground benefits for threatened species, so considerable thought and money has been given to how best to allocate resources for threatened species without those resources ever materialising.

Across Australia investment in threatened species recovery has rarely been adequate, resulting in significant cost inefficiencies in program delivery, and this is covered in the literature so you can read about it there. This was indeed the case in Victoria where poorly resourced programs were unable to substantially prevent threatened species declines. This has probably led to a perception within the natural resources management community that threatened species recovery projects are ineffective and that investment is better focused at the landscape scale. These attitudes reflect the current approach by the Victorian government to focus resourcing on programs that address landscape-scale restoration at the expense of single species recovery. The rationale seems reasonable to benefit the most species with a single set of landscape-scale restoration actions. At the core of this approach is the assumption that these actions will reverse declines in threatened species populations. However, the reality is far from this on the ground for threatened species, and this is because actions that bring about landscape-scale benefits, such as revegetation, pest control and legal protection, may help some threatened species populations but rarely prevent declines on their own.

The recovery of Victoria's threatened species is achievable. There are a range of new innovative and cost-effective approaches to threatened species recovery. We need to increase overall spending for both threatened species recovery and landscape-scale restoration, particularly in light of the catastrophic scenarios that will unfold under climate breakdown. Furthermore, both initiatives bring about enormous social, economic and environmental benefits by creating employment and stimulating economies in regional areas, sequestering carbon, improving the health of our natural ecosystems, preserving our natural heritage and bringing communities together to interact with nature in an inspiring, fun and innovative way.

As Victorians we take pride in our great outdoors and we really celebrate the diversity of our native wildlife. The plight of threatened species has never been in our hearts and minds more than recently after the devastating bushfires. Right now we have an opportunity to address the community concern about the extinction crisis by adequately funding an ongoing threatened species recovery program. In 2016 the New South Wales state government committed \$100 million over five years plus significant in-kind contributions to the Saving our Species threatened species recovery program. I worked on this program, so I saw how beneficial it is and what a huge success it is. It has boosted threatened plant and animal populations across New South Wales and drawn local communities into on-ground works, citizen science projects and nature-based community education. It has also produced numerous good news stories for the New South Wales government. The success of this program demonstrates that the cost of preventing extinction is far from exorbitant and that funding threatened species recovery is entirely feasible. We costed an ongoing program at around about \$20 million per year—that is 25 roundabouts or one road widening. This would be a good start to building a larger program to address the extinction crisis. Additional investment is also needed to build capacity for captive breeding programs for the zoos, plant propagation and seed storage programs for the botanic gardens and to support vital ecological research, such as that undertaken by the Threatened Species Recovery Hub and the Arthur Rylah Institute.

We want you to put the Threatened Species Conservancy out of business. The best way to fight extinction is through a state government-managed threatened species recovery program. But the department's position is that it will no longer support single species threatened species recovery, particularly for those species at highest risk of extinction. This needs to change, or in lieu of a state government-run program a similar program should be funded to be run by an independent non-government organisation. Thank you, and I will put the next slide on for you. Thanks.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much. All right, we will throw to questions—Cliff.

Mr HAYES: Okay. Thanks, Ms Murphy. That was very interesting. So you are saying we seek to spend money on identifying the problem but then are not resourcing what needs to be done and there seems to be a lack of political will to initiate a program. You are saying that New South Wales has run a successful threatened species program?

Ms MURPHY: It is incredibly successful. It is successful for threatened species; it is successful for people. Threatened species recovery is about threatened species, but in order to recover threatened species you need to

engage with all the stakeholders involved and with the communities. People really benefit from threatened species recovery. So yes, it has been successful in a number of ways: it has delivered on-ground benefits for threatened species; it has brought communities together. It has drawn people who would normally not have much to do with parks or whatever together. It is a really great way of teaching people about evolution and biodiversity and some of those scientific elements of what we do. That really connects people. It is a hook to get people more involved in nature.

Mr HAYES: That is fantastic. Something that I sort of bang on a bit is, you know, we are always spending money for bigger and better roads and roundabouts and things, but you mentioned looking at ways of servicing and growing our population. I often think that we could be putting money into revegetation of habitat, which the previous speaker talked about, but also with these programs you say that these could have economic benefits for small towns in getting threatened species programs going, regeneration, seed collection and propagation—things like that. Do you see that as being a potential industry of the future?

Ms MURPHY: Absolutely. I mean, the thing is we work in really remote areas, so we work in the Mallee; we work all through regional Victoria and actually in New South Wales as well now. We work in those communities and they are our key stakeholders. So with the Saving our Species program, for example, those programs would spend money in those regional areas, whether it was for contractors to manage weeds or for fencing contractors, whether it was hotels for people to stay in when they were working in remote areas, petrol stations, supermarkets. That money is then channelled into those communities, and those communities we see often are struggling financially, so it is a good way of delivering investment into those regional areas.

The CHAIR: I might go to Melina and I will come back around.

Mr HAYES: That is fine.

The CHAIR: Melina.

Ms BATH: Thanks, Chair. In your submission you mentioned:

As population monitoring was discontinued years ago, few data exist that describe the current size and extent of threatened species populations.

This is an area that is of most interest to me and I think many in Victoria. I am going to make a statement and then I would like you to respond. The health of populations, threatened species, and the population dynamics—we need to see this across the whole of the state, across all public land tenures, including our national parks. My contention is: could you respond to that in the light of your ‘population monitoring discontinued’?

Ms MURPHY: Yes. Well, I think that is a very good point to raise. We worked for state government many years ago when those programs ran, so we collected a lot of that data, but that data has not been collected since those programs ended in Victoria. We do not actually have real understanding about the state of many threatened species. We have for some, particularly the iconic species, but the majority of species, we do not know how they are tracking at all. I know there are some species that are right on the brink of extinction. We take a strategic approach to threatened species recovery, so we work through a number of steps to recover threatened species. One of the first steps we take is to assess all the known populations of that species. We go out, we relocate those populations, we count the numbers of plants or animals there and then we track that against previous records—so is that population increasing or decreasing? That gives us an understanding of whether that species is declining or stabilised or increasing. While we are out there we also collect a whole range of data about what threats are operating at that population, and that gives us really valuable information into what needs to happen to protect that species from further decline.

Ms BATH: Thank you. And a follow-up question: what date did that program finish, from your understanding?

Ms MURPHY: I could not tell you, but it was—

Ms BATH: Decades, or?

Ms MURPHY: It was within this decade, probably eight to 10 years ago.

Ms BATH: Thank you. That is very good. I have probably got another one, but I will sit for a minute, Chair. Thank you.

The CHAIR: I might just go with a question myself. The Victorian government has released its *Biodiversity 2037* plan. Are you aware of that plan, firstly? And if you are, can you talk to your understanding of how that is going to impact the sorts of things you are talking about, because that plan is actually going towards helping rectify some of the things you talk about? So how does that impact on some of the things you were talking about?

Ms MURPHY: Well, I think really the main issue is it focuses on landscape-scale restoration and moves away from single-species recovery. What has sort of happened in our field is that there are these two polarised perspectives on biodiversity conservation—that threatened species recovery is at the expense of landscape-scale restoration and that landscape-scale restoration must take priority over single-species recovery. But the reality is both are really critically important. Unfortunately the biodiversity strategy really focuses on landscape-scale restoration and pretty much states that single-species recovery is not something that will be focused on and that the majority of investment will not be spent on those species most at risk of extinction that are tricky to restore.

Just on that last point, there is this sort of assumption that threatened species recovery is expensive, but the thing is the more we invest, the more we improve our methodologies, and we have seen some incredibly successful programs from investing in threatened species recovery. For example, I mentioned there are two small programs that are currently going through the Royal Botanic Gardens and the zoo. The terrestrial orchid conservation program has really revolutionised the way we recover threatened orchids in Australia, and it has developed techniques that really make orchid conservation much more feasible, much more cost effective. The second point I would just like to make is: we really undervalue biodiversity conservation. I mean, when we compare what we spend on threatened species to other areas within our budget, it is absolutely nothing. It really is nothing, and it is really not even going to impact our state budget if we truly invest in this, and it will only bring positive outcomes, really.

The CHAIR: Okay. Thanks for that. Dr Ratnam.

Dr RATNAM: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms Murphy, for your presentation and for the really important work that you do. Just following up on the questions that have been asked, I am really interested to understand a little bit more about your perspective on what is actually happening in Victoria and why you are proposing the solutions you are proposing. I am just trying to get a picture. Correct me if I am wrong; I am trying to go to the next step. It sounds like what you are saying is that the Victorian government have taken a particular approach to the problems of extinction, and it sounds like there are two kinds of pathways you can go down, which is landscape restoration and/or single-species recovery. Ideally you have both working in tandem, but it sounds like from your presentation your perspective is that the Victorian government, or their agencies, have chosen the landscape restoration model versus the individual species recovery model. So you talked then about how the funding that is allocated at the moment—we estimate around \$20 million to \$30 million, which is not that much—is going into a lot of the development and into the tools to help identify how government should spend resources, but then those resources are not being spent to actually then recover the species. So I am trying to get an understanding of those different approaches. Why would you take a landscape-recovery restorative approach versus a single-species recovery approach given the New South Wales government single-species recovery approach with the Saving our Species program has been, it sounds like, very successful in managing threatened species? I would like you to talk us through why we have, you think, gone down this path and what is the cost of it if you do not do single-species recovery as well. And maybe, for the benefit of the committee, what are some of the differences between the two approaches?

Ms MURPHY: Oh, right. Okay. Look, as I said earlier and you also mentioned, both perspectives or both approaches are vitally important. We are heading into catastrophic climate change. The scenarios are incredibly serious, and they will have massive ramifications on our native vegetation and also on our native wildlife, so we really need to be thinking about how we are going to manage our biodiversity into the future and our threatened species into the future. Because if we do not, we are going to see widespread extinction and we will have to live with that. That is something that we will pass to our future generations, that story.

So both are vitally important, and so the Saving our Species program is run all across New South Wales, based primarily in the regions, and it works very closely with local communities. It is informed by scientific

knowledge and best practice. It is not about planting trees and shrubs and some of the landscape-scale restoration techniques. It is about managing the genetics of populations, dealing with inbreeding depression in very small populations, thinking about assisted migration, moving species into areas where they will be able to survive with climate change. It is about managing the effects of pest plants and animals. It is about community education, raising awareness and working with landholders to inform them of the wonderful assets they have. It is very much about connecting with people. They also work really closely with the Australian PlantBank, which is based at the Sydney botanic gardens. They are collecting threatened species' seed and putting it into long-term storage. These storage facilities have cryogenic facilities so that they can actually put seed into storage and it can be stored for decades if not hundreds of years.

We, the Threatened Species Conservancy, are working with the Australian PlantBank to develop a pilot program to scope large-scale rainforest seed collection—well, we call it germ plasm, but I will call it seed for you—and storage program to get as much rainforest seed into long-term storage so if, and hopefully not when, we lose cool temperate rainforest in Victoria, we will still have the capacity one day to restore it. If we do not do those things, these things are lost forever.

Dr RATNAM: So just one last question, very, very quick—

The CHAIR: We are running out of time.

Dr RATNAM: You are basically saying that that type of program we are not doing at a systemic, statewide level.

Ms MURPHY: That is right.

Dr RATNAM: There are some NGOs doing some of that work, but in Victoria we do not do a systemic, statewide—

Ms MURPHY: No.

Dr RATNAM: that type of work.

Ms MURPHY: No, that is quite overtly stated within the department. The zoos do some work, particularly on a handful of species and they do a great job. So does the Royal Botanic Gardens—similar, but mostly orchids. They do some seed conservation as well, but their facilities really need more funding to improve their seed storage capacity and get it to the level of the New South Wales program.

The CHAIR: Thanks. We are going to have to move along because we are running short of time.
Mr Meddick.

Mr MEDDICK: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Ms Murphy. It is a great presentation that you have made today and indeed your submission, your substantial submission. I just want to concentrate on a couple of very short areas, but I do have three questions in that that are interrelated.

I too welcome the investment the New South Wales government has made. But I am also aware of the realities of what that is on the ground in New South Wales. We have members of our party up there who regularly give feedback, and there have been criticisms of that program in New South Wales in that that program has deliberately ignored species that are politically motivated. The classic example was that the government, while they talked about these things, deliberately ignored the plight of the koala, for instance, because it is politically motivated. There were situations where government ministers intervened and saw koala habitat deliberately destroyed to make way for farming practices and for development. You know, perhaps some of the funding that they had put aside for threatened species could have been used in these areas for habitat protection. There should have been more done. But those criticisms aside, I too would like to see a major investment in Victoria.

I am just curious though, if such funding should come into play for a program such as purchasing land that is currently under private landholding for rejuvenation of all sorts of different things, like orchids, like native grass rejuvenation and all sorts of things, that will provide then habitat for those species that you spoke about now—the non-iconic species, you know, the smaller species that live amongst those grasslands, for instance—is that a program, or part of that, that you could support?

I am also curious about this question, which is something I am going to pose to a lot of people: in existing parkland, for instance, one of the greatest threats that is facing all sorts of different species is poisoning through indiscriminate poisons such as 1080, sodium monofluoroacetate. We constantly see it being put out in all places around Australia, ostensibly to cover two main species, which are foxes and what people call wild dogs—but essentially it is a dingo eradication program. But it has dramatic effects on all sorts of other threatened species; raptors who feast on the carcasses of those affected animals will also die. We know about what are called the secondary contamination effects of that poison. Is that something that you would like to see eradicated in order to support the survival of these species?

Ms MURPHY: Well, I firstly have to say that I am the botanist in the organisation, so those comments are probably better directed at a fauna ecologist. My area of expertise is really threatened plant recovery. But when we control impacts of herbivory, which is a big problem for Victorian terrestrial flora, we generally put in enclosure fencing, so we fence those populations off from browsing.

The second question was about purchase of land, and look, I think that that is something important and viable, so long as that land is existing bushland that would support those threatened species. Restoring threatened plant communities—and I will just talk about plants because that is my area—can be quite complex. You need to choose exactly the right vegetation in exactly the right climate with often a whole range of other factors as well, for example, the right pollinators, and for orchids the right fungi in the soil. So it is hard to make a broad-ranging statement about that because it is so complex. But yes, look, I think there is certainly a benefit for the government to purchase important biodiverse land and put it into the Parks estate, which I am presuming you are suggesting.

Mr MEDDICK: Ta.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Grimley, do you have a question?

Mr GRIMLEY: Thank you, Chair. I think perhaps I was missed in the initial introduction, so hello, Ms Murphy, and thank you for your presentation. Also, thanks for your team's work in what you do in biodiversity conservation. I am just very conscious of time, so just one quick question. In the presentation you spoke about recommending a statewide comprehensive, ongoing threatened species recovery program that is run by an independent non-government organisation. My question is: why is it important for such a program to be overseen by an independent non-government organisation?

Ms MURPHY: We primarily—and as I said in my presentation—want you guys to put us out of business. We think that primarily this role should be the role of government. And when we approach philanthropists to ask for money to support our programs—I mean, we do get support from philanthropy—they come back to us and they say, 'This is the role of government. Why should we give you some money? This is what government should be paying for'. So we do think it is the role of government, but unfortunately the government's position is that they do not support this sort of program, so what are we left with? In the absence of that, something has to be done, and an independent non-government organisation is the solution to that—an organisation that has the expertise to deliver threatened species recovery.

Mr GRIMLEY: Thank you.

The CHAIR: And last question, Dr Bach, with 4 minutes to go.

Dr BACH: Thank you very much, Chair. It has been fascinating to hear from you, Ms Murphy. Thank you very much. I might just ask a follow-up to the last couple of questions, and you may want to take this on notice. I am really interested to hear your commentary about what you think works elsewhere and also what is happening here in Victoria. I am sure senior departmental officials will have a different view about the approach that they are taking and the government is taking. I would love to see any data I could regarding the efficacy of the New South Wales model that you are advocating for. There are members of the committee who have a great deal of expertise when it comes to the terms of reference that we have before us. I confess I do not, so any data that could be provided in support of your position would be really helpful for me, if that is all right?

Ms MURPHY: Yes, sure. I do not represent the Saving our Species program, so it would really be worth talking to—and I can put you in touch with—the relevant people within the New South Wales government. We

are in contact with them and they are very supportive of what we are doing. They have got all sorts of data, and they could provide you with all those details.

Dr BACH: That is great. Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: Ms Bath.

Ms BATH: Thank you very much, Chair. I was interested in your comments around working with private landholders too and the importance there. I know that in Victoria often our landholders, our farmers, are really passionate about landcare. So I am interested in the opportunity to dovetail some of these programs on private land and your comments with regard to how that would look.

Ms MURPHY: Yes. I was actually talking to some colleagues last night about this, and we were saying there is a common perception that landholders are not happy about threatened species. But I have worked off and on I think for 20-plus years in this field, and I struggle to think of one interaction I have had with a farmer or a private landholder that has been antagonistic. The work that we do is a lot about chats and cups of tea and long walks on properties, looking at what biodiversity is on those properties. And the first thing is that those threatened species often exist on those properties because of the practices of those farmers and those landholders. So what they have done, the way have managed their land, has been conducive to supporting those threatened species. We need to tell people about the incredible assets that they have on their properties. They are ecstatic. They want to learn more. They want to do more.

We are running a program in the Woodend region. I have had landholders ringing up, sending me photos of the cages they are putting around their endangered black gum plants—'Is this what will keep the kangaroos from munching on my trees?'. We have a landholder in New South Wales who has volunteered his property for a very large fenced enclosure to protect endangered wattles. We have in Woodend the black gum project that we have been working on. We have had a huge response from the community, all landholders. Some people have spent their own money to fence off their creeks. We have provided them with free black gums and native plants to restore their creeks. So yes, I guess landholders and farmers have a vital role to play in threatened species recovery, and it is a great way to connect and raise awareness.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. Now, we are out of time, but what I might suggest is that if anyone else has any other questions perhaps we could submit them on notice for this witness, and then she could answer them later on.

Mr HAYES: Chair, could I ask: could we chase up that New South Wales data and get it supplied to the committee?

The CHAIR: Yes. We certainly can. We might get you to provide some contact details.

Ms MURPHY: Sure.

The CHAIR: And I can see the staff at the back are nodding furiously. Look, thank you very much for your submission and for giving evidence today. We appreciate you coming along. So thank you very much.

Witness withdrew.