

Victorian Legislative Assembly

INQUIRY INTO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE IN VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES

SUBMISSION from GREENING AUSTRALIA

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Submission contact:

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INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for inviting Greening Australia to make a submission to the Victorian Government *Inquiry into tackling climate change in Victorian communities*. Our submission is presented key dot point and structured on the four key topic areas set out in the Terms of Reference for the inquiry (15/07/2019). Greening Australia welcomes further questions and discussion arising from our submission.

1. MITIGATION:

Actions being taken by community members and organisations to mitigate the severity of climate change, including actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Greening Australia has created a prioritised map of biodiverse carbon planting opportunities on public land across Victoria (over 200,000 HA on our first analysis of publicly accessible data). We are currently providing the South Australia government with the same service – an assessment of biodiverse carbon planting opportunities on publicly owned ‘conservation lands’ across SA.
- Greening Australia is currently mapping opportunities for biodiverse carbon planting on private land at significant scale in South Gippsland, Central Gippsland and the Yarra Valley. This work is driven by *carbon sequestration* as the central program logic. A secondary program logic informing this mapping is *habitat for threatened species* – as formally listed under Schedule 2 of the Victorian Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1988¹.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victorian Government support its own Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) to work with NFP environment enterprises like Greening Australia to assess and map public and private land capacity for significant scale biodiverse carbon planting.

2. ADAPTATION:

Actions being taken by community members and organisations to adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change

- Greening Australia has developed a ‘climate adjusted future landscapes’ methodology that allows us to plan, design and implement landscape restoration at large scales for habitat, carbon, water quality. In so doing we respond to many institutional calls to accelerate the

¹ [Authorised Version No. 043 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 No. 47 of 1988](#)

(re)creation or renovation of landscapes with the greatest capacity to survive climate change^{2, 3, 4, 5}. As such, Greening Australia's work on future landscapes takes a scientific view over the horizon to ensure survival of globally important carbon plantings. Dead plants don't sequester carbon – so Greening Australia has distinctively brought climate predictions into both restored landscapes and management of existing (carbon stores) ecosystems.

- Greening Australia is implementing the two-year Climate Future Plots project for DELWP. This project has developed and is now delivering a climate impact monitoring method for Victoria's NRM sector. The long-term data from across the state will provide much needed capacity to inform and continuously revise land management actions across many decades.

RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Premier & Cabinet and Department of Treasury & Finance (DTF) direct financial support to DELWP to build efficiency gains, and overall effectiveness of well-designed co-benefit carbon project structures that return significant productivity, biodiversity, water quality, indigenous employment and sequestration outcomes for Victoria.

3. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT:

Ways in which the government can best support communities in their efforts

- The Expert Panel commissioned by the Victorian Government to develop Interim Emissions Reduction Targets for Victoria (2021-2030) recommend the Victorian government step up policy support, and indeed engage directly in accelerating biodiverse carbon planting⁶. Based on this report to Government, Greening Australia can see the potential for Government to commission the design of large-scale land restoration, or ecosystem renovation across Victoria for carbon-sequestration with multiple co-benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The DTF support DELWP to work with stakeholders, and favorably consider budget allocations that drive the development of a spatially explicit plans that will measurably deliver:

- Integrated (simultaneous) outcome delivery across multiple Victorian strategies – for example:
 - Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017 – 2020 (DELWP)
 - Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 (DELWP)
 - Our Catchments Our Communities Integrated Catchment Management in Victoria 2016–19 (DELWP)
 - Water for Victoria (DELWP)
 - Wildlife Conservation Masterplan 2019-2024 (Zoos Victoria)

² [CSIRO-NAB Australian National Outlook 2019](#)

³ [IPCC \(2019\) Special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels](#)

⁴ [J-F Bastin, et al \(July 2019\) The global tree restoration potential. *Science*. 365. pp 76-79](#)

⁵ [S. Prober et al, \(2019\) Shifting the conservation paradigm: a synthesis of options for renovating nature under climate change, *Ecological Monographs*, 89\(1\)](#)

⁶ [G Combet, P Whetton, L Stephenson \(2019\) Interim emissions reduction targets for Victoria \(2021-2030\): final report](#)

- Elevation to the status of ‘*investment ready*’ of the Victorian Government for co-investment in large scaled projects, designed principally for rapid and resilient carbon gains – but in addition delivering many more environmental, economic and cultural outcomes for Victoria.
- A Government endorsed platform developed by DELWP, for Victoria to be a *cornerstone investor* into large scale projects that attract multiple investors through the strategic delivery of measurable co-benefits, such as – biodiversity protection, threatened species protection, water quality, carbon sequestration, climate buffering for agriculture and urban, increased farm gate profitability.

4. BEST PRACTICE:

Interstate and overseas best practice models that could be implemented in Victoria.

- Greening Australia is continually assessing our project data for method and technology improvement. We also have key staff who monitor best practice ecosystem management under a changing climate.
- Greening Australia have numerous collaboration agreements nationally – mainly with universities and banks – aimed at development of new approaches to planning and resourcing ecosystem management for biodiverse carbon sequestration.
- In 2018 the Queensland Government pushed a set of climate resilience strategies – aimed at informing social, economic and environmental sectors⁷. Even though there are some perceived gaps in the strategic analysis of climate change, this set of documents represents an example of best practice planning around climate change at the state government level. There is potentially much that other states could learn from this set of plans.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victorian Government extend an appropriately resourced invitation to Greening Australia to prepare an integrated (co-benefit) project development methodology for large scale carbon gains across public and private land in Victoria.

SUMMARY:

Victoria is well-served by many years of strong strategic planning around climate, biodiversity, water quality, traditional owner involvement and our globally impressive national parks estate. Continued implementation through historic, accepted approaches along with allowing not-for-profit enterprises opportunities to assist through innovation program design is likely to significantly assist VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE.

Greening Australia welcomes any opportunities to provide clarification or further advice based on this submission.

⁷ [Queensland Government - Sector Adaptation Plans](#)