



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA  
Environment and Planning Standing Committee – Legislative Assembly

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **Environmental infrastructure inquiry shifts focus to regional Victoria**

Regional Victoria will take centre stage when public hearings resume for the parliamentary inquiry into environmental infrastructure for growing populations next week.

The Legislative Assembly's Environment and Planning Committee is focusing on community access to parks and open space as well as sporting fields, forest and bushland, wildlife corridors and waterways.

On Tuesday 20 April the Committee will hear from environmental and conservation groups including the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Dr Gillian Sparkes, the Victorian National Parks Association, Environmental Justice Australia and Wildlife Victoria.

A day later on Wednesday 21 April a series of regional councils will have their say with representatives from the Shepparton, Campaspe, Ballarat, Geelong and Bendigo councils to appear at the inquiry.

Committee Chair Sarah Connolly says regional input is vital as the inquiry seeks to inform government with findings and recommendations relating to the current and future arrangements to secure environmental infrastructure for a growing population.

"We know several regional cities are experiencing significant population growth and a wide range of concerns have been raised such as maintaining and creating corridors for wildlife, preventing habitat loss, Indigenous heritage and access for sporting activities," she said.

"While the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions have highlighted the uneven distribution of outdoor space across Victoria, they have also generated creative ideas for the use of existing outdoor space, for example golf courses, schools and bowls clubs, which are often under-utilised."

The Committee will wrap up the public hearing phase of its inquiry with a final hearing on Tuesday 27 April.

Relevant government agencies are expected to appear including Vic Catchments, Victorian Planning Authority, Infrastructure Victoria and Parks Victoria.

The 20 April and 27 April hearings will be [live broadcast](#), with the full schedule available from the Committee's [website](#).

The Committee received 262 submissions and has already heard evidence from metropolitan and outer suburban councils in significant growth corridors and peak academic, leisure and recreation stakeholders.

It is due to hand down a final report by the end of June.

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