

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Protecting environment

HOW are you dealing with the pandemic, the anxiety, the insecurity? If you are like me you seek solace in snatched moments of peace in our amazing natural environment, in such precious spaces as Redwood Park on the escarpment.

When I walk in this space I realise how lucky I am to have access to this and am grateful to the wonderful volunteers who have rehabilitated this awesome park.

But at the same time I worry about how quickly something like this can be lost.

Currently the Federal Government has a bill before the Senate that paves the way for the Federal Government to hand decision making powers about the environment over to the states and the safety net being offered is nowhere near what was suggested in a recent review into the current federal laws conducted by Professor Graham Samuels.

It was with some horror I read that Samuel said the government would be accepting "the continued decline of our iconic places and the extinction of our most threatened plants, animals and ecosystems" if it failed to implement the fundamental reforms recommended in the report.

We are in desperate need for responsible oversight of our unique biodiversity and environment to stop the decline we are currently experiencing.

One of my other favourite nature fixes is to walk in Kearney Springs park where we have a resident bat colony. I love the colony and the sense of connection it gives me to the natural world, but I am also aware that not everyone is happy about having the bats so close to our homes.

The sad reality is the bats are only here in town because so much of their natural habitat has been cleared and destroyed.

It is a failure of government to properly oversee and enforce environmental protections that has resulted in this situation.

Without adequate environmental protection we will see worse outcomes in the very near future. Do we want a world where our unique and iconic wildlife no longer existS, where koalas go the way of the dodo?

The proposed National Standards and Assurances Bill is due to be debated in the senate this month.

I just want to call on our elected officials to support the Samuel reforms in full, particularly the

call for strong legally-enforceable standards and an independent regulator.

We are indeed a unique and lucky country. Is it too much to ask to protect that for the future?

SHARON GEITZ, Toowoomba