

Review of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

City of Greater Geelong Officer Submission, March 2017

This submission regarding the Review of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 was prepared by officers from the City of Greater Geelong. Endorsement for these comments will be sought from Councils Executive in the near future. Remnant native vegetation now covers less than 5% of the municipality. The City needs a stronger and well resourced Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, after the review concludes, that will enable this decline in CoGG's Biodiversity Assets to be reversed. We welcome this opportunity to comment on the review. If you would like to discuss this further please contact [REDACTED]

Objectives

- We support the new objectives especially those concerned with *re-balancing conservation efforts to the preventative end of biodiversity decline to ensure a greater number of species and communities do not become endangered*. However we would like to see the commitment to *Guarantee all species survive* from the Current Act be retained. It is too early to determine the exact impacts of climate change on biodiversity. Victoria's most important state wide legislation about biodiversity should continue to guarantee that all species survive until evidence outlines a different direction.

Duty on Public Authority

- We support the recommended changes but would like for the Department of Environment Land Water Planning to be properly resourced to lead the implementation of the Act and biodiversity management across the state - including enforcement actions.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Strategy (currently the Biodiversity Plan)

- Support the recommended changes and a detailed legislative framework that includes state-wide targets. Targets need to direct management action and create a more robust Biodiversity Plan.
- Public reporting should not be limited to DELWPs public land management activities but also include private land biodiversity activities.

Listing

- We support the recommended simplification of the listing of threatened species and the adoption of a common methodology.

Biodiversity Planning

- We support the new recommendations but would like to see the mandatory Action Statements from the Current Act be retained. Action Plans, when available, have been invaluable tools for the management of listed species at a local government level as well as being required to be considered under the planning system.

Critical Habitat

- We support the concept of 'Critical Habitat' being expanded and critical habitats being mapped. Once identified and mapped there must be the legislative power and will under the Act to ensure these areas are protected.
- The mapped critical habitats could then form the basis of overlay planning controls being introduced across local government boundaries.

Resourcing

- We recommend that the government needs to make sure there are adequate resources to implement the Act. Currently there are no resources to deliver the Act, and therefore it is rarely (if ever) used.

Flora Controls

- We recommend that the FFG Act flora controls be applied to both public and private land – equally.