

Submission to the Independent Review of Victoria's Wildlife Act 1975

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This submission is a response to the invitation by the Victorian Government to provide feedback on the Independent Review of the Wildlife Act 1975.

I welcome the review of Victoria's Wildlife Act. The Act is outdated, reflects some obsolete principles of what constitutes wildlife and does not effectively protect Victoria's wildlife in the face of decline and in many cases extinction.

I ask that these be strongly considered for the revised Act:

- Protections for exotic invasive species like feral deer need to be removed. Deer cause significant environmental damage and should be listed as a pest species under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- The Wildlife Act 1975 should be titled the Native Wildlife Act and should properly protect all native vertebrate fauna.
- It should ensure that populations of native wildlife have sufficient population size, diversity and suitable habitat to maintain or improve the capacity of species to persist and evolve in the wild.
- The Act should ensure adequate monitoring of native wildlife populations and habitats, particularly those of threatened species, species likely to be in decline, and species subject to a control authorisation.
- The Authority to Control Wildlife system needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed, threatened species are properly considered, and so that there is far greater transparency and monitoring.
- The Act should guarantee the protection of species of cultural significance to Traditional Owners.
- The ability to declare any native wildlife species as "unprotected" should be removed.
- The Act should include the obligation of the government to consider expert advice on administration of the objectives of the Act.
- An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce, monitor and report on the administration of the Act, monitor decision making processes and report on outcomes, as well as increase in penalties.

Thank you for the opportunity of making a submission.