



# Review of the Victorian *Wildlife Act 1975*

## Update from the Expert Advisory Panel



The *Wildlife Act 1975* promotes the protection and conservation of wildlife, the prevention of wildlife extinction, and the sustainable use of, and access to, wildlife. The Act also plays a central role in Victoria's legal framework for protecting and managing biodiversity.

The Act has not been comprehensively reviewed since it became law more than 45 years ago. Many consider the Act to be out of step with modern, best practice regulation.

An Expert Advisory Panel has been appointed by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate to review the Act and provide recommendations for reform.

### Background

In May 2020, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change announced a review of the *Wildlife Act 1975*. This is part of a wider review of Victoria's legislative framework for protecting and managing biodiversity including reviews of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) and native vegetation clearing regulations and reforms to Victoria's animal welfare legislation.

#### Expert Advisory Panel



Dr Deborah Peterson



Dr Jack Pascoe



Ms Jane Brockington



Dr John Hellstrom

### Changes to the Expert Advisory Panel

Associate Professor Ngaio Beausoleil and Emeritus Professor Arie Freiberg AM have left the Panel. We would like to thank them for their valuable contributions in the early stages of the review.

#### Two new members have joined the Panel:

- Ms Jane Brockington**  
 Jane is a non-executive director who advises on regulation, governance, integrity and transformation. Jane has expertise implementing reform and strategic reviews, including the recent reviews of the Environment Protection Authority and Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability.
- Dr John Hellstrom ONZM**  
 John is an expert in animal welfare and was pivotal in developing New Zealand's biosecurity system. John was the Chair of the New Zealand National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee from 2009–2016.

They join:

- Dr Deborah Peterson (Chair)**  
 Deborah is an eminent agricultural, environmental and natural resource economist, with extensive experience working in both the private and public sectors.
- Dr Jack Pascoe**  
 Jack is a Yuin man living in Gadabanut country with expertise in ecological research and experience working with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians.



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Image © Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park



## Update on the engagement process

The Panel has gathered feedback, information and suggestions for reform from a broad range of people and organisations through:

- the online engagement platform, Engage Victoria
- online meetings, forums and workshops.

**Between 28 April to 30 June 2021**, more than 1000 stakeholders and members of the public provided submissions and comments for the Panel's consideration. To help guide submissions, we released an Issues Paper that set out the scope of the review and outlined some initial issues for consideration. View these submissions and comments on Engage Victoria [here](#).

**Between March and August 2021**, we also:

- met with many key stakeholders from the environment, animal welfare, wildlife conservation, tourism, agriculture and hunting sectors.
- met with government agencies to understand how the Wildlife Act is implemented and how it intersects with other Victorian legislation, including the recently amended FFG Act and the *Prevention to Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* which is currently being reformed.
- hosted three forums to hear the views of people involved in the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, possession and trade, and ecotourism sectors.
- hosted three workshops with experts to discuss compliance and enforcement mechanisms and deterrence of wildlife crime; the competing and diverse community values and expectations relating to wildlife, and rights and responsibilities relating to wildlife.

## Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Victorian engagement

**Between March and August 2021**, we engaged with representatives of Traditional Owner groups from across Victoria to hear and understand their rights, interests, cultural practices, and beliefs relating to wildlife. These meetings will continue throughout the review process.

Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians also contributed feedback through Engage Victoria.

## Next steps

A summary report on the consultation period will be available on Engage Victoria in the coming months.

We will provide our final report and recommendations for reform of the Wildlife Act to the Minister, by 30 November 2021.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning will then consider our recommendations and prepare a Directions Paper with final recommendations for reform of the Wildlife Act by mid-2022.



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## Find out more

For more information, please visit [here](#) and [here](#) or contact the [Panel Secretariat](#)