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Review of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act
Regulatory Strategy and Design
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Submission to the review of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a local resident to Woori Yallock [REDACTED]. I am writing this submission because I am very passionate about conserving and protecting the amazing biodiversity that we still have in our beautiful state. We have many threatened species, I believe in the Shire of Yarra Ranges we have a total of 21 threatened species alone and it concerns me to think my son will not be able to grow up living with the amount of amazing plants and animals that are in decline due to human destruction. Our state faunal and bird emblems are both critically endangered and found no where else in the world other than the small area they both inhabit which I can say I am lucky enough to be within a 20 minute drive to both areas. But the problem is bigger than just our State emblems, we are constantly hearing of rare and endangered plants in the local area and being a member of many environmental volunteer groups it is a serious concern when I see what was once a beautiful area along a natural creek bed now over run with invasive exotic weeds and feral pest animal species including rabbits, foxes, cats, deer etc, and there simply is no government allocated funding to maintain these areas. Due to these reasons I have listed and many more is why I have chosen to take my time to write, so you can hear an opinion that I know also speaks for others, as to why protecting the Flora and Fauna of our state is extremely important. This is our planet to treasure love and learn from and the more species we lose the harder it will be to save.

So thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act. As you have read this is an issue very close to my heart and I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to have my thoughts heard.

It is heartening and promising to know that the current government is following up its election promise to improve environmental protection through reviewing this Act.

While I appreciate this process, there are a number of proposals that have been concerning and I would like changed in the reforms.

Proposals that will be worse for our environment:

- ***Abandonment of 'the guarantee'***

Section 4.1

I am deeply concerned and troubled at this proposed change as it signifies downgrades of the government's commitment to ensuring **all** species of flora and fauna in Victoria should survive in the wild. The discussion paper is suggesting this objective is too ambitious and that it should no longer be included in the Act.

The centerpiece of the current Act is the commitment to ensure that all species of flora and fauna in Victoria survive and retain their potential for evolutionary development in the wild.

- ***Drop the requirement for action statements for all listed threatened species***

Section 4.3

Producing action statements is currently the only binding action that the government must take to protect listed threatened species.

Action statements are fundamental in establishing adequate recovery planning for threatened species. Action statements for specific species also inspire communities to protect their local places that are critical to the survival of individual species.

Essential elements that will strengthen protection of our environment and I would like to see in the Act are:

- **An enhanced chance for survival of threatened species** by removing exemptions and special treatments for government departments and some industries
- **An independent body appropriately funded to implement, and more strongly enforce the Act: This body will enable:**
 - A clear suite of stronger accountability tools, including clear monitoring and evaluation based on the ***adoption of a common assessment methodology using IUCN*** (International Union for Conservation of Nature) ***criteria***
 - Stronger enforcement, real penalties and better tools for accountability, that would also enable community groups to initiate action when breaches of the Act have taken place
 - **Clear targets and timelines** to direct investment and programs for threatened species protection and recovery, across the whole state

- A mandatory requirement for the Minister to intervene when important species or habitats are under threat
- **Giving communities the power to act**, including capacity to determine regional plans and ability to initiate legal action to protect threatened species

Conclusion:

In summary, whilst it is promising that the government is taking action to review the current Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, overall I see the proposed changes downgrade the government's commitment to protect threatened species. I strongly urge the Victorian government to take this opportunity to strengthen our environmental protection for current and future generations by implementing the suggestions above.

Kind regards,

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