

Wildlife Act Review

Submission Comment 155:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat

Comment

As an engaged citizen I am very concerned about the treatment of animals and erosion of their natural rights. I welcome this review and hope that it will lead to better protection of our native wildlife.

I believe animals are sentient beings and as such should be afforded legal protection. Native animals should not be traded for commercial gain or owned by humans.

I am particularly concerned by the disappearance of native habitat. When I drive up the Western Freeway to Ballarat, I am regularly shocked by the ongoing and insidious creep of housing developments into what used to be arable and native lands.

We absolutely must insist on a non-negotiable green ring around our cities, beyond which, no further development can occur. If housing is short, then developers should be forced to infill and move to denser housing rather than then continual encroachment on native habitat.

I am also concerned at the leniency of the penalties for harm to animals. I believe the current penalties should be at least doubled if not quadrupled. Maximum sentences of 10 years should apply and more importantly, be enforced.

To support this, the Government needs to invest in more wildlife protection officers and broad community engagement programs to ensure that every single Victorian develops an appreciation and respect for our wildlife. Transgression of these values should not be tolerated and the law should actually be used and applied to ensure people understand their responsibilities.

On the later, I do support a broad Duty of Care to wildlife which should be incumbent on everyone and a condition of citizenship.

I wish the panel well with their review. As human beings, we have a moral and cultural obligation to protect the animals and to ensure they thrive under our custodianship. Too often, as humans we fall short of this aspiration. I hope this review goes some way to creating better protections for wildlife.

Provided June 20/2021