

Wildlife Act Review

Issue Paper questions - Response 6:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Wildlife welfare

Question responses

1.1.1 In what ways does the Act succeed or fail in representing contemporary expectations for, and values relating to, wildlife in Victoria? Please provide examples from your own experience.

The Act does not reflect contemporary values. Views have changed in the last 45 years and the Act is no longer reflective of community attitudes.

1.1.2 Are there conflicts between the interests or expectations of different stakeholders or community members regarding wildlife in Victoria? Please provide examples from your own experience.

Many! Home residents and possums. Farmers and kangaroos/wombats/cockatoos. Shooters and ducks. Jet skis and cetaceans. Fishermen and entangled birds. Etc

1.1.3 How can the Act balance the diverse interests of Victorians in protecting, conserving, managing and using wildlife? How might such competing interests be better reconciled in legislation? Are there examples from other sectors or other jurisdictions (both in Australia and internationally) that may be useful?

Number one should be to give priority to protection of the wildlife. We have cleared so much habitat in the last 250 years, it has been one of the main drivers that Aust has more mammal extinctions than any other country. Then when some wildlife actually benefits from this we want to shoot them? Wildlife needs a voice.

1.2.1 Are the current purposes of the Act satisfactory? If not, what should the desired outcomes, objectives or purposes of the Act be? How should the objectives and purposes of the Act relate to the desired outcomes? How would they ensure desired outcomes are achieved?

They are not satisfactory, they are antiquated. The desired outcomes should be the protection of our wildlife (I don't mean deer).

1.2.2 If objectives and purposes are likely to be competing, how could the tensions be resolved?

Whatever the objectives, there will be tensions. I know people who would like to travel at 150kmph on the freeways, you could say there would be tensions between them and Vicroads, there are not, there are laws, strict enforcement, ample resources and commensurate/tough penalties.

2.1.1 Do you have any comments on the interactions between the Wildlife Act and other legislation?

Yes, the wildlife Act should also be responsible for cruelty to animals legislation as it relates to sanctioned killing of wildlife under the Act (culling, duck shooting etc)

2.1.2 Should wildlife, flora and fauna generally be regulated by a more inclusive statute?

I think it makes sense to have a standalone wildlife Act but maybe destruction of habitat (flora) as it relates to wildlife matters should be included in wildlife Act.

2.1.3 Should game management be regulated under its own Act? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach?

Where GMA is condoning the destruction to and of wildlife they should be overseen and regulated at every stage by the wildlife Act/DWELP (rather than as now, having the fox in charge of the hen house.

3.1.1 Should the Act include statements of principle and criteria to guide regulators, duty holders and the public? Why are such principles important? If you do support including principles, what do you think they should be and why?

Yes, the Act should definitely include statements of principle, similar to the recent amendments to the EPA.

3.2.1 Should the Act include provisions for consultation with the community on certain issues? What issues should undergo community consultation?

You are consulting with the community now. The Act needs to be robust and equitable and reviewed every 5 years. If the community brings to your attention an oversight or outcome deriving from the Act that was unforeseen amendments can be made in the usual way (through parliament?)

3.2.3 Are there currently barriers to private sector actors having meaningful involvement in wildlife management and conservation in Victoria? What are those barriers and what problems do they create for achieving the objectives of the Act? How might any such barriers be removed or minimised?

The department (like most Env depts) is under resourced, more authorized officers and even a few community liaison offers would be good.

3.4.1 Should the Act simplify and clarify the provisions relating to the various licences, permits and authorities? Is there scope to reduce regulatory burden without undermining the intended outcomes of the Act?

Yes, yes and yes. Transparency and clarity will be valuable.

3.5.1Is the Act transparent about who pays for regulatory services?

No it's not and it should be. Fees should well and truly cover the costs.

3.5.2Is full cost recovery appropriate, or should fees for some licences and activities be subsidised? What role is there for user pays or beneficiary pays principles? What, if any changes, should be made and why?

User pays, and full costs applied.

4.2.1Should the Act include provisions that require and enable establishment of a scientific advisory committee or advisory panels to provide expert guidance to key decision makers such as the Minister, the Secretary or the regulator on specific matters relating to wildlife? Why or why not? What other approaches are available?

True, independent, accredited scientists and similarly credentialed committees could (should?) certainly be engaged where necessary.

5.2.1Are the maximum penalties in the Act adequate to punish and deter offenders? If not, what should they be?

No they are not! Something more in line with NSW penalties would be a good start.

Provided May 17/2021