

Wildlife Act Review

Submission Comment 106:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Protections for marine mammals

Comment

The latest Victorian State of Environment Report identifies the clearing, fragmentation and declining quality of habitat as one of six major threats to biodiversity, with native vegetation being lost in Victoria at a rate of 4,000 habitat hectares per year. The destruction and degradation of habitat has flow-on effects on Victoria's native wildlife, increasing the vulnerability of our ecosystems. In Australia, state governments have primary responsibility for natural resources, including native fauna. Jurisdictions such as Queensland and New South Wales now explicitly specify that indigenous wildlife, unless lawfully taken or used, is the property of the Crown (Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld); Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)). In contrast, Victoria's Wildlife Act does not confer this status. Wildlife should not be considered as property at all; rather, the law should recognise inherent rights in wild animals (wildlife and nature as legal subjects). As a Victorian resident, but having residing in country Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland born , I can say that none of the state governments are to be trusted with the management of wildlife and habitat. The wildlife is part of Australia's cultural heritage and is strongly interconnected to healthy ecosystems. Healthy ecosystems provide food, fuel and fibre. They purify air and water. They moderate climate, floods, droughts, temperature and wind. They generate soil fertility and cycle nutrients. They maintain genetic resources. They bring cultural and aesthetic benefits. Strong ecosystems contribute to physical, mental human health. Volunteering with Parks Victoria, I witness losses of habitat from transport construction, and urbanisation in small habitat remnants. Writing submissions to the state government is time wasting without federal jurisdiction. I want strong outcome-focused environmental standards that protect our unique places, plants, animals and ecosystems.

Provided June 9/2021