



The Victoria Naturally Alliance – a shared vision

MEDIA RELEASE

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Babbler extinction a call to action on the Peninsula

An alliance of Victorian environment groups has warned that the recent local extinction of a once common bird species from the Mornington Peninsula is just another sign that the State Government needs to massively boost spending on restoring and protecting habitat for Victoria's hundreds of threatened species.

The warning follows the release of the State Government's Land and Biodiversity Green Paper, a draft plan for rebuilding Victoria's devastated natural environment and protecting threatened species from extinction.

Speaking in Moorooduc this week the Victoria Naturally Alliance's Carrie Deutsch said the Grey-Crowned Babbler, a fun and sociable bird once common throughout the lowland woodlands and open forests of south-eastern Australia, was last seen on the peninsula in 2002.

"The extinction of the Grey-Crowned Babbler from the Mornington Peninsula is symptomatic of a much larger problem in Victoria," she said.

While welcoming the release of the Land and Biodiversity Green Paper, which is open for public comment until June 30 this year, Ms Deutsch said the draft plan failed to come up with critical funding solutions and a long-term vision for restoring Victoria's degraded natural environment.

"More than a third of our native animals and close to half our native plants are threatened with extinction, including many species found in the Port Phillip and Westernport area," she said.

"The science clearly shows that Victoria is the most environmentally damaged state in the country. Quick fixes won't save many of our threatened species from extinction. The government has a responsibility to put long-term programs in place to ensure our unique wildlife is here for the future."

The government is holding a series of workshops around Victoria to allow the community to provide feedback on the Land and Biodiversity Green Paper. A workshop is planned for Beaconsfield on Tuesday, May 13.

The alliance is urging all Victorians who care about the future of the state's natural environment to have their say in this important process.

"Victorians have for years shouldered the bulk of responsibility for looking after and restoring the small but extremely important patches of native bush that provide critical habitat for many of our endangered species," she said.

"We need a plan to support local communities right across the state to protect and restore habitat for threatened species.

"It's a huge job and that's why the Victorian Government has to take responsibility by putting in the funding and resources to make sure our unique wildlife is around in the future.

Roger Richards lives in Somers and co-ordinates the Devilbend Bird Monitoring Team, which carries out monthly bird monitoring at Devilbend Reservoir.



The Victoria Naturally Alliance wants to see Victoria's native plants and animals protected from threats including climate change and habitat loss. For more information go to www.victorianaturally.org.au.



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He has been following declining bird numbers on the peninsula for more than 25 years.

“Most of the woodland birds on the peninsula are declining,” he says. “Including birds such as the Crested Shrike Thrush and our many small honeyeaters, which are suffering a loss of habitat.

“Egrets and the Australasian Bittern, which rely on healthy creeks, rivers and gulleys as habitat, are also in trouble,” he says.

“If we are to bring back species that have become locally extinct we have to restore lost habitat and create wildlife corridors between places such as Devilbend Reserve and Greens Bush. These areas are vital to the preservation of species, especially small mammals such as bandicoots.”

Ms Deutsch said that while it is probably too late to bring the Grey-Crowned Babbler back to the Mornington Peninsula there are still many other threatened species, including the Southern Brown Bandicoot and White-bellied Sea-eagle, that will benefit long into the future if we protect and restore their habitat now.

“The Land and Biodiversity Green Paper is an excellent opportunity for Victorians to tell the State Government that we want it to come up with the money and long-term plans needed to ensure our precious native wildlife is around for future generations to enjoy,” she said.

More information

The Victoria Naturally Alliance has set up an online submission form to make it easier for people to get involved in the Land and Biodiversity Green Paper process. Just go to www.victorianaturally.org.au and follow the “Make a submission” links.

You can download the State Government’s Land and Biodiversity Green Paper by going to www.dse.vic.gov.au/landwhitepaper

Who we are

The Victoria Naturally Alliance is led by the Victorian National Parks Association and includes the Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society and Greening Australia (Vic). Environment Victoria, Trust for Nature, the Invasive Species Council and Bush Heritage Australia are also part of the alliance.

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