



The Victoria Naturally Alliance – a shared vision

MEDIA RELEASE

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Victoria running out of time to save threatened species

An alliance of eight environment groups has warned Victoria is fast running out of time to save many of its native plants and animals threatened with extinction.

Welcoming the release today of the Land and Biodiversity Green Paper, the Victoria Naturally Alliance said Premier John Brumby has a responsibility to protect the state’s unique wildlife from a deadly combination of habitat loss, weeds, feral animals and now climate change.

“The science is telling us that Victoria’s natural environment is in worse condition than any other state in the country,” the alliance’s Carrie Deutsch said.

“CSIRO figures show that nearly a third of our native animals and close to half our native plants are threatened with extinction. Of the 90 Australian animal species already identified as at risk from climate change more than a third are found in Victoria.

“Quick fixes won’t save the hundreds of Victorian species at risk of disappearing forever, including our own faunal emblem the Leadbeater’s Possum.”

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

VNPA executive director Matt Ruchel said the State Government had to show leadership by coming up with the targets and resources needed to save Victoria’s threatened species.

“Thousands of people in the community are doing their bit, planting local plants and keeping weeds out of our national parks,” he said. “This is extremely important work but these groups need help.

“We need at least a ten-fold boost in funding levels to protect and restore habitat and a long-term strategy to ensure the survival of our threatened wildlife.

“We’re calling on the State Government to set clear targets to cut the number of threatened species by protecting existing native bush and planting large-scale wildlife corridors to help species cope with the damaging onset of climate change.

“The Premier’s climate change summit recognised the need to protect biodiversity and the Land and Biodiversity White Paper is the way to set the agenda. This is a great opportunity and the government needs to show leadership by developing clear targets, effective policies and committing to a major boost in resources to save our threatened species.

“Unless we act now our children and grandchildren will miss out on experiencing Victoria’s unique and diverse natural environment.”

For further comment:

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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.