



The Victoria Naturally Alliance – a shared vision

MEDIA RELEASE

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White Paper offers hope for wildlife

The State Government's Land and Biodiversity White Paper process has the potential to undo the damage done by nearly 200 years of land clearance and habitat destruction in Victoria, an alliance of eight peak environment groups said today.

"Already, a third of our native animals are either extinct or threatened and our indigenous plants are faring even worse," Victorian National Parks Association director Charlie Sherwin said today.

"We've got the unenviable distinction of being the most cleared state in the country and when you throw in climate change it's easy to see that Victoria's biodiversity has reached crisis point," he said. "The white paper, which the alliance has been calling for since last year, could be the lifeline we've been looking for."

Called Victoria Naturally, the alliance is led by the Victorian National Parks Association and is backed by a broad cross-section of environment groups including the Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society and Environment Victoria.

Greening Australia (Vic), Trust for Nature, Bush Heritage Australia and the Invasive Species Council are also part of the alliance.

The government is launching the consultation process period for its Land and Biodiversity White Paper today. The alliance wants to see significant outcomes from the paper, including:

- A large boost in funds for restoration of bushlands for landholders including commercial farmers.
- A burgeoning 'restoration industry' that provides jobs for rural Victoria and is based on strong science and works with local communities.
- Greatly increased efforts to control weeds and feral animals in our national parks, to give natural systems some resilience in the face of climate change. Victoria's Alpine National Park, recognised as one of Australia's natural areas most threatened by climate change, needs urgent attention.

Victoria Naturally Project Leader Carrie Deutsch said the alliance will channel the collective knowledge, passion and dedication of the alliance members into ensuring Victorians are living in a robust, healthy environment not just in ten years time but well into the next century.

"Just as there are no winners in an ailing economy there are no winners in an ailing environment," Ms Deutsch said.

"And in the same way that plants and animals rely on a healthy environment for survival so do humans. The environment provides us with not only clean air and water but many other ecosystem services we take for granted, including pest control and pollination.

"So it's in everyone's interest, farmers, business, mums and dads, that we get it right."

For further comment please contact:

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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.