



**WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

20 September 2018

SENATE INQUIRY: AUSTRALIA'S FAUNAL EXTINCTION CRISIS

To Whom It May Concern

This submission is made on behalf of the members of Warringal Conservation Society who are deeply concerned about Australia's very high rate of native species extinction. The list of Australia's threatened species is continuing to grow, and threats to native species are increasing. We need the government to improve our national environment laws to protect threatened species and their habitat; and we need increased funding for recovery plans and conservation.

Warringal Conservation Society is a not-for-profit community-based organization caring for the environment in the City of Banyule, Victoria, and beyond. Our members are of all ages and walks of life. Our common goal is to protect the natural environment with all its natural fauna and flora. We actively contribute to the environment biodiversity that we know sustains and enriches all of our lives and those of the generations to come.

The clearing of native vegetation is perhaps the greatest cause of the extinction of native species because it fragments habitats and isolates populations of plants and animals. It also allows feral invaders to establish themselves. A well-known example of this is the case of Victoria's Mountain Pygmy-possum. The development of the ski fields at Mt Hotham and at Mt Buller led to the destruction of connecting habitat corridors for this pygmy-possum. The Buller population then crashed in numbers and in genetic diversity. Had a recovery program not been put in place in 2011, this possum would very probably have become extinct in Victoria. Stronger Federal laws are needed to stop excessive clearing of native vegetation, and funding increased for recovery plans like this one, and for habitat restoration and conservation.

Laws to protect the mountain ash forests of Victoria and the old growth forests in East Gippsland from further logging must be strengthened. Mountain ash ecosystems are now listed as Critically Endangered under the IUCN Red Listed Ecosystem assessment. Large hollows in the trees of old growth forests are essential for the survival of arboreal marsupials such as the Threatened Greater Glider and the Critically Endangered Leadbeater's Possum.

Wherever large infrastructure projects are planned (such as ski runs, shopping centres, roads and freeways), zones of connecting habitat for native species must be ensured and maintained. An example that illustrates where this has not occurred is the current situation of 20 to 30 landlocked kangaroos at Mernda in Victoria, that are separated from a larger group in the Plenty Gorge by new fencing built for the railway upgrade from Melbourne. Kangaroos are not currently listed as threatened. However, as pointed out, the fragmentation of habitat that leads to isolated populations of native species is one of the causes of extinction. Poor planning design for infrastructure, built to meet the need of increasing human populations that does not ensure habitat connectivity, is likely to increase Australia's species extinction rate. Good design, strong compliance measures, and adequate compliance resourcing to guarantee the survival and well being of native species in infrastructure project areas must be guaranteed by strong federal law and conservation resources.

*Postal: PO Box 64 Rosanna 3084 VIC      Email: [warringal3084@gmail.com](mailto:warringal3084@gmail.com)*

*A local, not for profit based organisation caring for the environment in Banyule  
Warringal Conservation Society Inc. (no. A0008773D) ABN 88059344924*



**WARRINGAL CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Hunting is another cause of the extinction of native species. Australia's rarest waterfowl, the Freckled Duck, is not a target species for recreational duck shooters; yet many are shot and killed in the annual hunting season in Victoria. National law needs to be changed, with resources provided that may include tourism, to remove the threat posed by hunting to the survival of this rare species.

We urge you to address our inadequate environmental laws with resolve and we thank you for considering our submission. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Daphne Hards  
President