

LOVE NATURE, PROTECT NATURE

THE GREENS' PLAN TO PROTECT VICTORIA'S SPECTACULAR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND OUR NATIVE AND ENDANGERED ANIMALS



Victoria's natural environment is under constant pressure from unchecked development and other threats. The Greens will protect nature with dedicated funding for our native animals and strengthened environmental laws.

Victoria's natural places are already the most damaged in Australia, and things are getting worse, not better.

This environmental destruction is happening all over Victoria.

From our fragile alpine environment, threatened by feral deer and climate change, to our beaches, eaten away by rising tides and development. From our forests, devastated by Government-sanctioned logging, to our grassy woodlands, disappearing under new roads and urban sprawl.

Our endangered animals are disappearing because of habitat loss and logging, duck shooting, and introduced predators like cats and foxes.

This is an environmental tragedy, and it is happening piece by piece in front of our eyes. We need to act now to protect nature and our precious and unique plants and animals.

OUR PLAN

Protect native animals:

- End cruel duck hunting in Victoria
- Fund vital wildlife rescue services and emergency wildlife hotlines in Victoria
- Create a roundtable to bring Traditional Owners, scientists and conservationists together to discuss the benefits of re-wilding parts of the state including introducing native apex predators, such as the dingo, in areas where it might be appropriate for the environment.

Strong laws for nature:

- Introduce a new Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, which means the Minister or Department has to step in and act if an endangered species is threatened by a development or other process.
- Introduce laws to ensure the Sustainability Fund is actually spent on the environment - not just kept aside to prop up the Government's Budget
- Develop strong regulations to give Victoria's Environment Protection Agency the power to protect our environment from corporate pollution
- Reform the environmental assessment process in Victoria, to build in greater community consultation and genuinely independent environmental assessments.

PROTECT NATIVE ANIMALS

Stop cruel duck hunting

Every year from March to June, otherwise protected duck species are declared 'game' and are allowed to be shot. In addition to the slaughter of so-called 'game species', many other protected ducks and other bird species are also shot on our wetlands.

Up to one quarter of birds that are shot fly away wounded, and will go on to suffer long, painful deaths or survive with enduring injuries including from shotgun pellets embedded in their bodies.

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We should be protecting our native birds, not facilitating their injury and death. Duck shooting has been banned in WA, NSW, Queensland and was never permitted in the ACT.

The Greens will not stop fighting to end barbaric duck hunting in Victoria.

Fund wildlife rescue

Every year, thousands of native animals in Victoria become sick, injured or orphaned, often as a direct result of human activity such as being hit by a car. If left unassisted, these animals may suffer and die in pain or of starvation.

Across Victoria, thousands of dedicated volunteers care for our wildlife. Wildlife Victoria helps 50,000 animals each year and receives countless calls from the public about injured wildlife, but currently receive no government funding to run their important emergency phone line. They cannot keep up with demand. Many calls each day go unanswered, so animals don't get the help they need.

The Greens' plan to protect our wildlife will provide \$250,000 per year in funding to fund emergency wildlife rescue phone services, such as Wildlife Victoria, so they can support volunteers to do their important work.

Protect our dingos

Dingos play an important role in our natural ecosystems, but not enough is known about how best to protect them and safeguard their future in Victoria.

The Greens will provide \$1 million to establish a dingo round table, bringing together researchers, public land managers, animal conservation groups and Traditional Owners. This group will assess existing science and research and develop an evidence based plan for dingo conservation in Victoria. This will include looking at whether re-wilding and re-introducing dingoes into some areas is of conservation and cultural benefit.

STRONG LAWS FOR NATURE

Unlike developers and industry, nature has no voice to stand up against its destruction and no big dollars to throw at the old political parties. That is why we need the strongest possible environmental laws to protect our natural places across the state, before they are gone forever. The

Fix the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act is Victoria's main piece of legislation for biodiversity conservation. Unfortunately, this Act places little actual obligation on government to protect nature.

Labor promised to reform the Act, but their proposed new laws changed nothing and were no stronger than the previous, ineffective laws.

The Greens will introduce laws to give the Act the teeth it needs, forcing governments to take action and develop plans to protect and restore habitat for threatened species, where they are threatened by development and other processes, such as invasive species.

An empowered Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

The EPA has recently undergone a comprehensive review process. Overall, this has been positive, but there is much more to do to ensure our environmental cops have the rights powers to protect our environment.

The Greens' commit to close involvement in the development of new regulations under the Environment Protection Act, to ensure they will adequately protect people and the environment from pollution.

Strengthened environmental assessments

The approval processes for new developments, like mines and housing developments, are stacked against communities and the environment. The developers get to provide the 'assessments' that form the basis for making decisions.

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These are often not balanced, but community and environment groups don't have the resources to balance the scales.

The Greens will reform the environment assessment processes in two ways.

1. We will ensure that environmental impacts are considered in the context of what's happening across the whole state (cumulative impacts), to stop the piece by piece destruction of our special places
2. We will set up independent panels to conduct environmental assessment reports, with funding to be provided by developers.

Spend the sustainability fund

Victoria already has a Sustainability Fund, a bucket of money for environmental protection raised through the landfill levy. But it just sits on the Government's books, propping up the Budget, and isn't actually spent on the environment.

We would legislate that the government must actually spend this money. Spending would need to be reported to Parliament to ensure it is for legitimate environmental protection.

RELATED ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Further information about our comprehensive environment policies can be found at:

<https://victoria.greens.org.au/platform>

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST

The Greens have committed \$12 million to the nature protection actions outlined in this initiative including:

- \$10 million for environmental law reform
- \$1 million for wildlife protection
- \$1 million for an apex-predator round table.

Further funding commitments for the environment our detailed at <https://victoria.greens.org.au/platform> and form part of the Greens election platform, which is being fully costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office.