

**Friends of Warrandyte State Park submission to the
Review of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
Consultation Paper March 2017**



14 March 2017

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) is one of the oldest and largest friends' groups in Victoria with a current active member base of 269 members. FOWSP volunteers contributed more than 5000 hours per annum of hands-on voluntary work, some at a highly skilled level. The aim of our group is to foster awareness of the natural values of the Park and to assist the Rangers in the care and protection of both the State Park and the Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve. However we also take a broader interest in conservation issues as we realise that biodiversity and flora and fauna are not limited to within the boundaries of the Park and Reserves.

Our Group runs an indigenous plant nursery in the Pound Bend area of the Park. We also provide information on indigenous plants, weeds and various aspects of bushland conservation to our local community.

We believe that it is critical to our aims that Victoria has a strong and effective Act to protect the flora, fauna and biodiversity of communities from all threatening processes.

We value all our local remnant bushland on public and private lands. Good wildlife corridors are necessary for flora and fauna to be able to move from place to place as climate conditions dictate. Some additional revegetation is necessary to reinforce those corridors such as the Warrandyte Kinglake Habitat Corridor. However quality bushland should never be traded off for such areas of future enhancement.

There must also be protection in some special instances for non-native vegetation where it has become essential habitat for vulnerable animals. A clear example in our area is the Powerful Owl that is frequently observed to roost in pine trees and occasionally other exotic trees.

Thirdly resources must be available for control of threatening processes including rabbits, foxes, cats and increasingly, in our area, deer. A local example is deer wallowing and crashing through our gullies, thus destroying habitat for the Southern Toadlet *Pseudophryne dendyi* which is already vulnerable.

As a group we agree that five key elements need to be included in the new legislation. These are outlined below and are supported by Environment Victoria, Environmental Justice Australia, and Victorian National Parks Association.

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1. A fair go for threatened species: Threatened species provisions must be retained in the FFG Act and overhauled so that:

All public authorities are required to comply with the provisions of the FFG Act to ensure that the provisions of the Act have greater effect across various spheres of government decision-making.

Current exemptions to threatened species protections removed to ensure they apply to all sectors - including forestry - and apply on private, as well as public land.

2. Stronger stop and protect powers: There must be greater clarity around when and how the government is required to act to protect threatened species (as opposed to the existing discretionary tools).

3. A nature cop on the beat: The compliance and enforcement provisions of the FFG Act need a major overhaul, including a new entity to monitor and enforce the provisions of the FFG Act and a range of penalties for non-compliance.

4. Clear targets and timelines: The biodiversity plan that is currently being finalised by the government must have a stronger legislative framework, including the requirement to have simple, measureable and ambitious 20 -year biodiversity targets.

5. Giving community power to act: so that they are able to take legal action to protect threatened species and for the FFG Act to also establish a framework to enable regional communities to develop landscape scale restoration action plans.

Regards,

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On behalf Friends of Warrandyte State Park Committee