

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Monday, 15 February 2021

EXPERTS TO LEAD MAJOR INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WILDLIFE ACT

The Andrews Labor Government has appointed an independent expert advisory panel to lead a review of the key Act that protects and manages our state's unique wildlife.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio has announced the most comprehensive review of the *Wildlife Act* since its introduction more than 45 years ago, to ensure that it keeps pace with contemporary issues, changes in policy settings and community expectations.

Front and centre to the review will be the advice provided by the independent expert advisory panel.

The panel will be chaired by Deborah Peterson, Visiting Fellow of the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. Dr Peterson is an eminent agricultural and natural resource economist, and has extensive experience working in both the private and public sector.

The other panel members are:

- Ngaio Beausoleil, Massey University's Co-Director of the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre and an expert in wildlife welfare and ethics
- Jack Pascoe, a Yuin man living in Gadabanut country who has extensive experience working with Traditional Owners and an expert in ecological research and conservation land management
- Monash University's Arie Freiberg, who has extensive experience and expertise in regulatory reform.

The panel will engage widely with the Victorian community about what changes to the Act are necessary to establish a modern, best-practice wildlife regulatory framework.

As part of their review, the Panel will look at how the Wildlife Act benchmarks against wildlife legislation in other jurisdictions. This could include how best practice regulatory frameworks for areas such as the rehabilitation of wildlife and the private and commercial keeping and trade of wildlife can be applied in Victoria.

They will also consider whether offences and maximum penalties under the Act are appropriate to punish and deter wildlife crime, such as the illegal destruction of wildlife and the illegal capture and trade of wildlife on the black market.

This will align with the current review of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* to ensure a modern animal welfare regime.

The panel will report on its findings and recommendations by mid-2021. Community consultation with the panel will open via Engage Victoria in March 2021.

For more information go to wildlife.vic.gov.au/wildlife-act-review.

Quotes attributed to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"It is important Victoria's wildlife legislation is modern, fit-for purpose and includes all the necessary safeguards to punish and deter wildlife crime."

"In the 46 years since the Act was developed, there have been many emerging issues that aren't covered by the Act and community values and expectations have changed considerably."

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