Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037

The emerging policy framework for climate change adaptation of biodiversity

James Todd Director Knowledge & Decision Systems Branch Biodiversity Division DELWP



Environment, Land, Water and Planning Important shifts in the way we are approaching biodiversity conservation:

- conservation management is shifting away from planning for threatened species 'one at a time'
- Addressing the game-changing influence of climate change
- focussing on long-term outcomes and securing the greatest net benefit for the greatest number of species
- enhancing decision making capability (more agile and adaptive)
- Securing increased and sustained investment
- improving collaboration across the biodiversity sector

Long term plan for stopping the decline of Victoria's biodiversity and improving our natural environment:

- Aims to get ahead of the challenge by re-focussing effort where the most gains can be achieved (not only critically endangered species).
- SMART decision-making and SMART targets
- Collaborative Biodiversity Response Planning better alignment and accountability
- Sustainable funding model including Investment Prospectus
- Accompanied by a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) Framework – ensure transparency, accountability, responsive, adaptive

New approach

A landscape approach to manage ecosystems and ecological processes for the benefit of all species, rather than planning for threatened species one at a time.



Improved scope

- 1. more comprehensive and integrated coverage of species
- 2. consider ecosystem processes and disturbance regimes (incl. climate change)
- 3. focus on benefits of action
- 4. identify cost-effectiveness across all combinations

Improved and practical rigour

- 5. based on available evidence and best-practice techniques
- 6. a new measure of species prognosis under feasible management

- Change in Suitable Habitat

7. stimulate and focus continuous improvement

A common measure for estimating & comparing outcomes

Change in Suitable Habitat – a purpose-built, scientific measure representing the health and prognosis of native species across Victoria.

It is the increase in likelihood that a species will still exist at a location at a future time (e.g. 50 years) in response to sustained management of relevant threats.

Considers the type, extent and configuration of habitat for a species, and the factors that influence how much a species can make use of this habitat (this could include population impacts e.g. predator pressure, genetic issues)

Based on CSH data modelled across many locations/species/actions:

- we can compare the benefits of a variety of management actions and understand the relative cost-effectiveness of options
- we have developed an integrated outcome target, and identified contributing actions targets that are more familiar and tangible for stakeholders and more easily understood by the Victorian community

Strategic Management Prospects mapping

Analysis provides Statewide context and outputs at a scale that can inform Regional and Local planning.

> Ranking of costeffectiveness.

Management actions that deliver the most cost-effective outcomes.



Summary of targets

Goals	Victorians value nature	Victoria's natural environment is healthy.
Statewide targets	 By 2037: All Victorians connect with nature 5 million Victorians act to protect the natural environment All Victorian Government organisations that manage environmental assets contribute to Environmental Economic Accounting 	 A net improvement in the outlook across all species by 2037, as measured by Change in Suitable Habitat, with the expected outcomes being: That no vulnerable or near-threatened species will have become endangered That all critically endangered and endangered species will have at least one option available for being conserved <i>ex situ</i> or re-established in the wild (where feasible under climate change) should they need it A net gain of the overall extent and condition of habitats across terrestrial, waterway and marine environments.
Contributing targets	 In the first 5 years: Initiate pilot programs to connect and engage people with nature. Establish reliable baselines about Victorians' awareness of biodiversity, connection with nature, and current activities to protect the natural environment. Develop a campaign to raise awareness about Victoria's biodiversity, and to increase opportunities to connect with nature and act to protect the natural environment. So that by 2022 additional contributing targets are established, informed by baseline data. 	 Minimum required to deliver statewide targets over 20 years: x million hectares of control of pest herbivores (e.g. deer, rabbits, goats, feral horses) in priority locations x million hectares of control of pest predators in priority locations x million hectares of weed control in priority locations x00,000 hectares of revegetation in priority areas for connectivity between habitats x00,000 hectares of new permanently protected areas on private land.
and Enabling actions		Enabling actions to identify detailed additional Contributing Targets, by 2022: Waterways : identify opportunities for alignment of the biodiversity benefit- cost approach of this Plan with existing approaches of the Victorian Waterway Management Strategy Fire : identify priority areas relating to interaction of fire regimes and threatening processes (such as invasive species, drought) Climate change : identify candidates and options for direct manipulation of threatened or keystone species Marine : map biotopes and develop a process to assess cost-benefit of management options. Draft

Climate change is game-changing, and will ultimately determine outcomes, but how should it specifically influence our decisions to act?

- > Where are the refugia we can buffer and protect?
- Where are the most vulnerable places where we will accept loss?
- Where are the species that can move, likely to go?
- How should the above influence where we tackle existing chronic threats? (e.g. invasives, fire or water regimes, lack of habitat/connection)
- Which species will rely on direct manipulations? (e.g. translocation, rescue, genetic strengthening, ex situ)

- Purpose of the MER framework
 - accountability, progress, improving the quality & flow of evidence in decision making
- Program logic and models
- Elements of the framework
 - Intervention monitoring
 - Research monitoring
 - Surveillance monitoring
 - Evaluation of the Biodiversity Plan
 - Capabilities
 - Data storage
 - Dissemination and utilisation