



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Hearing date: 1 September 2025

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, James Todd

Received date: 13 October 2025

- **P.57 Georgie Purcell**

Question: ...DEECA obviously has the responsibility of overseeing the welfare of wildlife on one hand and then oversees permits to authorise the shooting on the other. There have been some suggestions that this should be taken away from the department or perhaps given to another department to remove any perceived or actual conflict of interest. Has that ever been explored, and could you also outline to us what the department is doing to support rescuers on the ground?...

James TODD: Just so I am clear about the question, the question is about the issue of separating the powers of the conservation regulator from those where they are licensing carers, for example, versus the decisions around lethal control of kangaroos and separating those?

The CHAIR: Yes.

James TODD: ...I am happy to take it on notice.

Response:

Establishing the Conservation Regulator as an independent regulator is a matter for the Minister for Environment.

- **P.58 Georgie Purcell**

Question: ...has there been any exploring or investigation by the department of long-term sustainable funding that would help reduce the very clear burnout we have heard about throughout this process?... Has the department looked into any more sustainable reimbursement models that could help to ensure that these people who are responding can continue to do that work?... What would it cost to reduce those confidence intervals?...

James TODD: I would have to take that one on notice.

Response:

The Victorian Government is committed to the protection of wildlife and supports Victoria's wildlife welfare sector and its many volunteers who dedicate their time and expertise to care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

Since 2015, the Victorian Government has provided \$18 million to support wildlife welfare outcomes, including:

- \$7.2 million (2023-24 State Budget) for wildlife welfare actions through a new Zoos Victoria wildlife hospital, Zoos Victoria Outreach Program, Wildlife Emergency Support Network.
- \$2.3 million to support the work of authorised wildlife shelter operators and foster carers through the annual Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants (<https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/grants/wildlife-rehabilitatorgrants>) and support for recovery from emergency events, this provides grant funding upfront to reduce some of rehabilitators' out of pocket expenses.
- \$2.1 million (2025-26 State Budget) to support the protection of wildlife, through continued support for Wildlife Victoria Hotline and for shelters and carers to rehabilitate wildlife.

The Department takes a continuous improvement approach to the support provided and considers alternative delivery mechanisms to provide additional support to rehabilitators.

1. P. 59 Richard Welch

Question: Just back on the aerial surveys, how much do they cost? ... What would it cost to reduce those confidence intervals?...

James TODD: ...I am happy to provide answers to both those questions on notice.

Response:

The cost of the aerial survey is typically \$300,000 - \$400,000. Cost varies due to external factors, including weather delays during the survey. The analysis and modelling of the survey data to produce kangaroo population estimates is an additional cost to the aerial survey.

Reducing the confidence intervals of the kangaroo population estimates would require greater survey effort, including increasing the number of

kilometres of transects flown. Specific details regarding the increased survey activity are needed to accurately estimate the increased cost.

The current survey methodology as outlined in the peer-reviewed publication [Spatio-temporal trends in the abundance of grey kangaroos in Victoria, Australia](#) achieves confidence intervals that are adequate for the purposes of recommending total take of kangaroos in Victoria. There are currently no plans to change the survey methodology.

- **P. 60 Richard Welch**

Question: Do you think the current volunteer model that we have got now is sustainable?... DEECA must have a professional interest in whether it is a sustainable model or not, because it is part of your actual process... DEECA does not know?

James TODD: I will take it on notice.

Response:

Wildlife Shelters and Foster Carers play a critical role in the rehabilitation of sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. Their work is highly valued by the Victorian Government and the community.

The Victorian Government supports authorised wildlife rehabilitators to help care for and rehabilitate sick, injured or orphaned wildlife with the goal of releasing these animals back to the wild.

Since 2008, the Government has provided over \$3.6 million to support the wildlife rehabilitator sector, through the annual Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants and support for recovery from emergency events.

The annual Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants provide funding to help rehabilitators improve the quality of wildlife care. This includes support for building knowledge and skills through training courses and access to relevant educational materials.

In August 2023, DEECA released the Wildlife Rehabilitation Guidelines which support wildlife carers to understand current best practice in wildlife rehabilitation. The guidelines were developed in collaboration with Zoos Victoria, members of the wildlife rehabilitator community and experienced wildlife veterinarians around Australia.

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Guidelines are published on the DEECA website, they span over 864 pages and cover 148 native species likely to come into care in Victoria.

In addition to the Wildlife Rehabilitator Grants, over \$6.6 million has been invested in key organisations and targeted wildlife shelters, including support for the Wildlife Victoria Hotline and Vets for Compassion.

Operation of the hotline helps ensure prompt response to both the Victorian public and to sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife.

The Government has also committed \$4.7 million for development of a new wildlife hospital in Victoria to be run by Zoos Victoria with the aim to increase access to specialised facilities to care for and treat wildlife.

The Zoos Victoria Veterinary Outreach Program will also be expanded. The program aims to develop the knowledge and skills of general practice veterinary professionals to support the clinical assessment of native wildlife presenting to veterinary clinics. Zoos Victoria has delivered training workshops within 30 veterinary clinics across the state.

Investment in this program of work will increase the access to specialised facilities to care for and treat our wildlife and will support increased capacity in servicing and caring for wildlife hurt in traffic accidents, natural disasters and other events.