



WILDLIFE AND THREATENED SPECIES BUSHFIRE RECOVERY EXPERT PANEL COMMUNIQUÉ AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2020

The Wildlife and Threatened Species Bushfire Recovery Expert Panel (the Expert Panel) held several meetings through August and early September, with a focus on finalising a number of reports and providing scientific advice on future investment priorities and grant proposals.

Management interventions for priority animal species

In March 2020, [119 animal species](#) were identified as high priority for urgent management intervention following the 2019–20 bushfires.

The Expert Panel also identified which of several broad [priority management interventions](#) were most relevant for each of these species. These actions were based on consensus opinion across many experts and are intended to inform the management response immediately, and in the first year, post bushfire. However, this information should not be the only consideration of decision makers when focusing investment and effort. For example, communities and experts undertaking on-ground actions will have a deeper knowledge and understanding of their local environment and appropriate recovery actions that are needed.

Providing advice to help identify priorities for the Regional Fund

As part of the investment by the Australian Government, \$110 million will be directed to strategic on-ground support for native species across the [seven most vulnerable bushfire-affected regions](#). These are: the rainforests of south-east Queensland; rainforests of the NSW north coast and tablelands; the Greater Blue Mountains and World Heritage Area; forests of the NSW south coast; Australia's alpine environments across ACT, NSW and Victoria; forests and coastal ecosystems of East Gippsland; and Kangaroo Island.

To inform delivery of the Regional Fund, the Department is running virtual workshops in each bushfire-affected region to identify the priority investment needs. Expert Panel member Dr Libby Rumpff has been facilitating the virtual workshops with Traditional Owners, conservation groups, natural resource managers, Landcare representatives, land managers, local councils, heritage experts, scientists (including members of the Expert Panel) and State and Commonwealth government representatives. The first workshop was held with Kangaroo Island stakeholders on 18 August, with workshops for the other six regions being held through to the end of September.

Many of the species affected by the bushfires occur across regions and jurisdictional boundaries. Recovery for these species may be more complex, as it often relies on coordinated delivery across jurisdictions and regional boundaries to ensure that

management actions are being conducted in ways that are complementary and as efficient as possible.

A portion of the \$110 million Regional Fund is planned to be directed to multi-regional projects and actions for at-risk species. The Expert Panel has been assisting the Department with the development of principles for the identification and prioritisation of multi-regional species and management interventions.

Providing advice on the Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery program

In August, the Expert Panel considered and provided advice to the Department on the project proposals submitted under Tranche 2 of the Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery Program.

The second round of funding has focussed on the projects that support priority plants (such as the Bolivia Wattle and the Kangaroo Island Trigger Plant), and invertebrates (including the Green Carpenter Bee, Giant Dragonfly, Purple Copper Butterfly, Glenelg Freshwater Mussel and 18 species of land snail).

Overall, the 18 successful projects will benefit 76 (16%) of the identified threatened plants and 95 (50%) of the invertebrate species that were listed as a priority by the Expert Panel.

- Dr Sally Box, Chair of the Wildlife and Threatened Species Bushfire Recovery Expert Panel.

Panel members

Dr Sally Box (Chair)

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Advisers

Representatives from fire-affected states and territories (NSW, VIC, WA, SA, QLD, Tasmania, ACT)