

MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday 6 February

Emus cruelly cut down in deliberate hit and run

Wildlife Victoria, the State's wildlife emergency rescue service, is calling for criminal proceedings to be lodged against the heartless people who deliberately drove into a family group of emus earlier today in Chetwynd Victoria.

Wildlife Victoria CEO Lisa Palma said the Wildlife Victoria Emergency Response Service had received a call earlier today from a distressed person who encountered the severely impacted animals after they had been involved in road trauma.

"One or more people are responsible for this senseless act that has killed an adult emu and two young emus, and left a third young emu so dreadfully injured, that it must be euthanised," she said.

"Our Volunteer attending the scene has been traumatised by what she has seen."

"This is a vile act of animal cruelty that has been reported to the Police and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning" Ms Palma added.

This is the second act of deliberate hit and run cruelty that has been reported in Victoria in the past week, with a similar incident involving emus in Gippsland.

Ms Palma urged anyone with information about the perpetrators to contact their local Police, or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000

How to avoid a collision with wildlife

- Stay alert and drive carefully through the home of our wildlife. If you know you are in an area where there is wildlife, stay focused on the road. Be aware that wildlife may be grazing on the roadside.
- Reduce speed so that you can increase your reaction time, should wildlife come onto the road.
- Be especially careful driving between dusk and dawn. This is a very dangerous time to be driving. Much of Australia's wildlife will be out at night in search of food.
- Take care when leaving new housing estates that are situated near native habitat. Many of the wildlife related road accidents reported to Wildlife Victoria happen in areas where humans and animals are sharing nearby living spaces.
- Pay attention to yellow road signs that indicate wildlife in the area.
- If you see an animal near the road, slow down, and prepare to brake if needed.
- If you are driving at night in rural areas, use your high beam headlights for better sight, and watch for reflecting eyes.
- Take it extra slow when road visibility is poor.
- Be aware of smaller animals such as birds, echidnas, possums and reptiles.

What to do if you have a collision

- If you do have a wildlife collision, pull over to a safe spot, put on your hazard lights and check to make sure everyone in your vehicle is safe.
- Take note of the street address or nearby landmarks to enable emergency support workers to find the location.
- If anyone is injured call an ambulance on '000'.
- Telephone Wildlife Victoria's Emergency Response Service on (03) 8400 7300, or you can lodge a report via the Wildlife Victoria website www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au or via the Snap Send Solve app to get help for the animal. Even if the animal appears to be unharmed and has hopped or moved away, it will be injured.
- Wildlife Victoria's emergency response service can help. Volunteer rescuers can be dispatched to check the animal's condition
- A life-saving pouch check is so important. If the animal is deceased or injured there may be a joey in its pouch that has survived the impact. A joey can survive in a pouch for several days after its mother has died. Alternatively, the joey may have left its mother's pouch but still be nearby.
- If the animal is deceased and on the road, please take time to move it to the side of the road (if safe to do so). By doing this, you are removing the hazard for other drivers and ensuring that other animals will not be injured while feeding on the carcass.

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For further information contact: Wildlife Victoria's media team on 0447 193 121 or media@wildlifelifevictoria.org.au

About Wildlife Victoria

- Wildlife Victoria is a not for profit wildlife Emergency Response Service that has been operating for more than 30 years as an independent, not-for-profit organisation focussed on the welfare of Australia's unique wildlife.
- Annually, Wildlife Victoria's Emergency Response Service receives more than 88,000 requests for assistance and assists over 50,000 sick, injured or orphaned animals.
- Wildlife Victoria educates the community about wildlife, and helps the community manage wildlife incidents.
- Wildlife Victoria advocates for wildlife whenever their welfare is under threat or compromised.