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Pockets run deep for duck hunters but budget ‘too tight’ for statewide wildlife rescue charity

Wildlife Victoria, the state’s 24/7 wildlife Emergency Response Service charity organisation, has landed on the Allan Government’s chopping block after its much-needed funding submission was rejected in the state budget.

Wildlife Victoria has operated the state’s wildlife emergency response service since 1989 providing the Victorian public with a free 24/7 wildlife rescue service for sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife.

While the government could fund the continuation of duck hunting with a \$10 million investment, the state’s wildlife emergency response service remains critically underfunded.

Wildlife Victoria is experiencing a substantive long-term increase in demand for services with a 46% rise in calls for assistance from members of the public between 2019 and 2023.

This increase in demand has driven operational costs to a level that is no longer sustainable for a charity, and the government was approached in good faith for a modest increase in annual funding.

“While we welcome the announcement of funding for families in this year’s budget, this isn’t an either-or situation. We’re in the middle of an extinction crisis during a climate emergency and native animals are essential to the health and future sustainability of our ecosystems. Once we lose them – they are gone forever.”

“Today’s announcement is yet another slap in the face from the Allan Government and demonstrates the blatant disregard for our wildlife who do not have a voice and rely on us to help them. This persistent failure to show care and support for native wildlife places the future of our children and generations to come at significant risk.” **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

Wildlife Victoria’s Emergency Response Service is fully staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, ensuring members of the public who encounter sick, injured, or orphaned native animals will always be able to seek assistance.

With over 1,300 registered volunteers across the state, Wildlife Victoria’s Emergency Response Operators can dispatch an experienced volunteer to the site of the incident to ensure every native animal has the best chance of survival.



Wildlife Victoria also operates a seven-day-a-week Travelling Veterinary Service. This service provides critical wildlife veterinary support across the state at no cost to the public or wildlife rescue volunteers, easing the pressure on an already overburdened veterinary sector.

Wildlife Victoria fills a key gap in government services for wildlife and is regularly deployed to respond to matters when government departments are unable to do so.

The organisation's funding submission had asked the government to increase its annual contribution to the non-profit charity from less than 10 percent of annual operating costs (\$500,000) to 50 percent (\$3 million).

"The funding request reflected the significant increase in demand for our services from the Victorian public and would have represented an acknowledgement from the Allan Government that wildlife emergency services are crucial to the protection of our native species."

"The outcome of today's announcement is a devastating blow to native wildlife. We now need to consider how we continue to operate in such a volatile financial environment." **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

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For additional information or interview requests, contact Wildlife Victoria's media team on 0447 193 121 or media@wildlifestvictoria.org.au