

Submission to the Threatened Species and Ecological Communities Inquiry

a). Many key threats are believed to be responsible for threatened species current status, but few have been demonstrated. Without funding to determine what the key threats are, management or acknowledgement of the key threats does not occur, or management is focused on one perceived threat. If there is a potential economic cost, e.g. clear fell logging, it is imperative to be able to demonstrate the impact of that threat to properly inform management. Land management agencies are unlikely to change their current practices unless there is scientific evidence to justify the change.

b). The listing and development of a national recovery plan for the spotted-tailed quoll, *Dasyurus maculatus*, illustrates the current problems and issues with the development and implementation of recovery plans.

The species was nominated to be reclassified to Endangered in 2001 and was reclassified in 2002. A draft national recovery plan was published in 2004. A revised recovery plan was published in 2007. The national recovery plan for *Dasyurus maculatus* (spotted-tailed Quoll) has still not been released as of December 2012.

In the interim, the causal factors responsible for the species continuing decline have continued operating, the species range and abundance has continued to decline and no funding has been available to identify and address the factors responsible for the species decline. At the time of writing I would estimate the Victorian population at fewer than 500 individuals, it has become extinct or it is at such low numbers that is functionally extinct in Western Victoria, much of the North-east, Central Highlands and South Gippsland. The core population is now restricted to the Upper Snowy River area.

c). There is probably no appropriate land management undertaken for *Dasyurus maculatus* in Victoria in any tenure. Clear-fell logging of old growth forest still occurs, suitable or potentially suitable habitat is still being fragmented or degraded. Broad-scale baiting is being conducted in known quoll habitat, despite evidence that at least some individuals will be poisoned. The Black Saturday Royal Commission has resulted in a substantial increase in the area of crown land burnt each year. Most fuel reduction burns are too hot and not mosaic, resulting in at best temporary loss of habitat for several years.

d). Funding has been delayed, waiting on the release of the final recovery plan. At present funding for recovery plans do not meet the current funding criteria, and haven't for at least the last 5 years.

e). See b). above. Over 10 years to develop and release a national recovery plan is grossly inadequate.

f). The state governments have been reluctant to acknowledge the potential causal factors in the species ongoing decline, due to current practices and potential economic loss e.g. Brown Mountain court case.

g). The current business plan and funding model fails to provide any avenue for funding national recovery plans, and has done so for at least the last 5 years. The focus is on icon sites and ecological communities rather than species. Neither is independent and a mix of funding between ecological communities and threatened species would provide a much better outcome. Most endangered species require specific management that generic community management is unlikely to adequately address. For many endangered species, the causal factors for their decline are not known, so applied research is required to properly inform management. Any proposal with the word RESEARCH is unlikely to be successful in receiving funding. This results in many recovery plans bleeding money because they have been unable to identify the critical factors responsible for the given species decline and adapt management appropriately.