

Action Statement Three Year Plan

A three year implementation plan for Action Statements



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About this document

The Action Statement Three Year Plan is an overarching implementation plan for the development of Action Statements from 2013 until 2016.

Policy and program managers in the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and other Natural Resource Management (NRM) agencies that contribute to the management of Victoria's Threatened Species and Communities are the key audience for this document.

This document outlines how DEPI strategically plans for the development and review of Action Statements. It describes general background, roles and responsibilities and DEPI's prioritisation criteria for Action Statement development.

Background

The preparation of Action Statements is a statutory requirement for items listed as threatened (or as potentially threatening processes) under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act). It is the responsibility of the Secretary, DEPI, to prepare an Action Statement as soon as possible after listing.

The FFG Act requires an Action Statement to set out what has been done and what is intended to be done to conserve or manage an item and may include information on what needs to be done to conserve or manage the item. In the preparation of Action Statements, the Secretary must consider management advice given by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Victorian Catchment Management Council (VCMC). An Action Statement (unlike the listing process) must consider the social and economic impacts of any proposed set of actions.

While there are no provisions under the FFG Act that commit to implementation of Action Statements, *The Code of Practice for Timber Production* (2007) requires that forestry operations must comply with measures specified in relevant Action Statements.

The Actions for Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) is a system that DEPI uses to house and report on planned and completed actions from Action Statements. The ABC system supports DEPI staff when they are setting priorities for implementation or reporting on implementation. Data quality in the ABC system is maintained by a network of DEPI Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) and DEPI regional staff that perform “item monitor” and “location monitor” roles. The ABC system can also be used to generate draft Action Statements automatically, when there is sufficient data held within the system.

In practice, Action Statements contain substantially more information than the FFG Act requires. The general headings in a published FFG Action Statement include:

- Description
- Distribution
- Habitat
- Life history and ecology
- Conservation status (State and Federal)
- Threats
- Important populations
- Past management actions*
- Conservation objective
- Intended management actions*
- References

*Required by the FFG Act

Action Statement Status June 2013

The development of Action Statements is a sometimes very complex task. Individual Action Statements can take a number of years from inception to finalisation. As of June 2013, 689 items had been listed under the FFG Act. Approximately 30% of listed items have an approved and published Action Statement, 30% have an unpublished internal draft (at different stages of completion) and 40% are at a very early stage (see Figure 1).

FFG Listed Items - Status of Action Statements

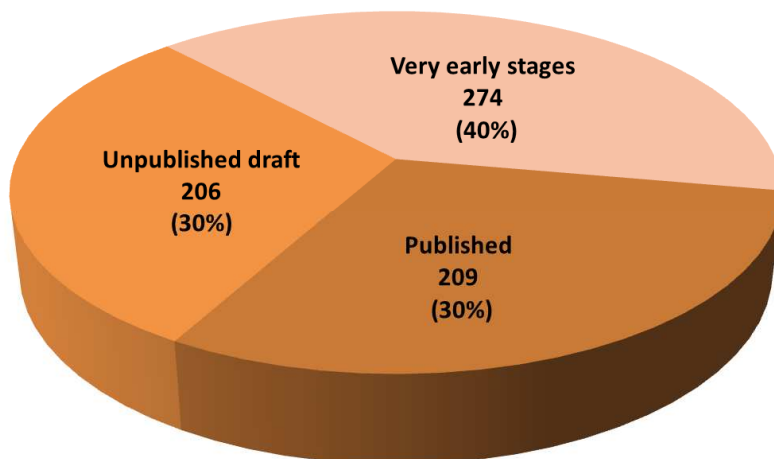


Figure 1: There are 689 items listed under the FFG Act as of June 2013. Of those, 30% have a published Action Statement, 30% have an unpublished draft prepared and 40% are still in the very early stages.

Scope

The document outlines a three year (2013-2016) implementation plan for the development of Action Statements.

The purpose of this implementation plan is to meet the department's obligations under the FFG Act by outlining a framework for the preparation of Action Statements, as opposed to the more detailed implementation of Action Statements or the broader programs to manage threatened species.

Within this context, this implementation plan provides:

- A prioritisation framework, based on status of outstanding Action Statements, key risks and complexity.
- Clear guidance on governance and authorisation.
- A summary of the overall Action Statement process.

The plan does not review the current approach (e.g. consultation requirements or Action Statement format), as the plan is being developed in the knowledge that several projects, including the *Threatened Species and Communities Roadmap* (the Roadmap) may affect how Action Statements are prepared in the future. As new advice is provided through these processes, the plan may be modified.

Action Statement Implementation Plan

Governance

a) Roles and responsibilities

Table 1 lists the key stakeholders and describes their roles and responsibilities in the development, endorsement, approval and publication of Action Statements. The process for approval of an Action Statement is summarised in **Figure 3**.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities for development, endorsement, approval and publication of Action Statements.

Stakeholder	Authority	Role and responsibility
Minister for Environment and Climate Change	Approval	Where appropriate, resolves intended management actions that impact on other divisions and agencies. Where appropriate, approves final Action Statement.
Minister for Agriculture and Food Security	Approval	Where appropriate resolves intended management actions that impact on other divisions and agencies. Where appropriate, approves final Action Statement.
Secretary, DEPI	Approval	Where appropriate, resolves or escalates intended management actions that impact on other divisions and agencies. Receives advice from the Deputy Secretary, Land Fire and Environment to endorse Action Statements. Approves final Action Statements. Approves final Action Statements to be published on the DEPI website.
Deputy Secretary, Land Fire and Environment	Endorsement	Receives advice from the Executive Director, Environment and Landscape Performance to endorse Action Statements. Recommends to the Secretary, DEPI to approve Action Statements. Where appropriate, resolves or escalates intended management actions that impact on other divisions and agencies.
Executive Director, Environment and Landscape Performance	Endorsement	Receives advice from the Action Statement PCB to endorse Action Statements. Recommends endorsement of Action Statements to the Deputy Secretary, Land Fire and Environment.
Action Statement Project Control Board (PCB)	Endorsement and advice	Consists of the Environment and Landscape Performance division (lead) and the Environment Policy division. Endorses individual items to have Action Statements developed. Provides comments on draft Action Statements. Endorses draft Action Statements prior to consultation with the SAC, the VCMC and the public. Recommends endorsement of Action Statements to the Executive Director, Environment and Landscape Performance. Provides overall guidance for the preparation of individual Action Statements and implementation of the Three Year Plan.
Responsible Director, Environment and Landscape Performance Division	Endorsement and advice	In addition to role as member of Action Statement PCB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for overseeing the preparation of Action Statements, Ensures that Action Statements are consistent with any

Stakeholder	Authority	Role and responsibility
		<p>guidelines and the Action Statement Three Year Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributes draft Action Statements for agency/divisional consultation. • Notifies relevant stakeholders during public consultation, • Principal contact for stakeholders during Action Statement preparation.
Environment Policy division	Endorsement and advice	In addition to role as member of the PCB, provides advice, when appropriate, if an Action Statement is consistent with DEPI policies and plans on all drafts prior to public consultation.
Action Statement Coordinator	Advice	<p>Contact point for informal advice and support for all Action Statements.</p> <p>Works with (DEPI Terrestrial Biodiversity Leadership Group) and ARI to develop priority list of items.</p> <p>Manages consultants and ensures drafts developed by consultants meets the standard outlined in the <i>Action Statement Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>Coordinates consultation process for all Action Statements.</p> <p>Makes minor edits to drafts in response to comments received.</p> <p>Produces communication material and prepares briefs seeking approval and publication.</p>
Head Office divisions, DEPI (where appropriate)	Endorsement and advice	<p>Advises the PCB, when appropriate, if an Action Statement is consistent with DEPI policies and plans on all drafts prior to public consultation.</p> <p>Formal advice may include attending technical working groups to discuss individual management actions. A technical working group will only be formed if all impacted Executive Directors agree it is needed.</p>
Terrestrial Biodiversity Leadership Group	Advice	Works with the Action Statement Coordinator to review priority list of items.
Regional Services, DEPI Environment and Water Regional Managers	Endorsement and advice	<p>Works with the Environment and Landscape Performance division to ensure that the preparation of Action Statements is appropriately resourced in annual business planning.</p> <p>Appoints Action Statement authors or reviewers of initial drafts.</p> <p>Endorses the initial draft of the Action Statement (where the author is within their region) ensuring it meets the standard outlined in the <i>Action Statement Guidelines</i> and has undergone informal consultation.</p> <p>Provides endorsed draft Action Statements to the Action Statement Coordinator, Environment and Landscape Performance division.</p> <p>Provides advice to the Action Statement Coordinator throughout the development process.</p> <p>May attend technical working groups for individual management actions. A technical working group will only be formed if all impacted Executive Directors agree it is a necessity.</p>
ARI - Director	Endorsement and Advice	<p>Works with the Environment and Landscape Performance division to ensure that Action Statements are appropriately resourced in annual business planning.</p> <p>Appoints Action Statement authors or reviewers for initial drafts.</p> <p>Endorses the initial draft of the Action Statement, ensuring it has undergone an internal review process and meets the standard outlined in the <i>Action Statement Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>Provides approved draft Action Statements to the Action Statement Coordinator, Environment and Landscape Performance division.</p> <p>Provides advice to the Action Statement co-ordinator throughout the</p>

Stakeholder	Authority	Role and responsibility
		<p>development process.</p> <p>Formal advice may include attending technical working groups for individual management actions.</p>
Action Statement Author		<p>Produces initial draft Action Statements.</p> <p>Works with the ABC System item monitor and the location monitor to ensure the ABC system is up to date.</p> <p>Consults with relevant stakeholders and land managers.</p> <p>Incorporates comments from formal consultation, public consultation and the SAC and VCMC review.</p>
ABC System item monitor		<p>Responsible for overall management and coordination of on-ground actions for the item and enters all details for the item into the ABC system.</p> <p>Assigns location monitors.</p>
ABC System location monitor		<p>Responsible for the management of information about an item at specific locations.</p> <p>Selects actions for that location and assigns responsible agents.</p>
Contractor		<p>Drafts or reviews initial version of Action Statements to standard outlined in the <i>Action Statement Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>Provides advice to the Action Statement coordinator throughout the development process.</p>
Recovery teams and Stakeholders (where appropriate)		<p>Provides input and expertise into the initial draft of Action Statements.</p>

Prioritisation

a) Background

The criteria listed under *Prioritisation process* have been developed to:

- prioritise between existing draft Action Statements;
- identify new priority items for Action Statement development;
- identify priority published Action Statements that require updating.

In year one of the plan the initial focus is to complete existing draft Action Statements. The reasons for this initial focus are:

- There are over 200 unpublished Action Statements in draft stage.
- DEPI would lose the initial investment already expended developing these drafts if they are not finalised.
- A number of items with existing draft Action Statements also score highly for risk.

While the initial focus is on existing drafts, it is recognised that new items and published Action Statements may also be a priority and will be included in year 2 and 3 of the plan.

The process below describes how Action Statements will be prioritised annually, noting that year one has focused on existing draft Action Statements.

b) Prioritisation process

The Action Statement coordinator (the coordinator) assesses each listed item against the criteria below. Each sub-criteria (A & B) is ranked as low medium or high.

Criteria for listed items:

1. Risk
 - A. Environmental Risk
 - Risk of extinction
 - New/immediate threat
 - Change in management practice
 - Important ecological role
 - B. Accountability
 - High community interest
 - Substantial previous investment
 - Presence of National Recovery Plan
2. Complexity (Time/effort required)
 - Ecological complexity
 - Number of locations/tenures
 - Community or threatening process vs. single species
 - Multiple threats
 - Number of stakeholders
 - Amount of available information
 - Stage of completion (for existing drafts only)
 - Age of draft (2007) (2008-2010) (2011-2013) (for existing drafts only)

Once the initial assessment is complete, the coordinator provides the draft list (including each item's score to the criteria above) to the Terrestrial Biodiversity Leadership Group who review the priority items and endorse the draft list. the six DEPI regions and ARI then produce a list of Action Statements to be developed in the following year. Once agreement is reached the coordinator seeks endorsement by the Action Statement PCB. Once completed the approved list of Action Statements will be incorporated into business plans and agreements.

Implementation Plan

The implementation plan will provide direction for the development of Action Statements for the next three years. The initial priority for the implementation plan will focus on the completion of existing draft Action Statements. In years two and three of the plan, the focus will be revised, and additional items will be identified for Action Statement preparation and review.

While it has been important to develop a plan for the future, the implementation plan may need to be amended to take into account the outcomes of the Roadmap project.

Year 1 (2013 - 2014):

Focus: Existing draft Action Statements

Outcomes:

- Finalise and publish a number of existing draft Action Statements. The final number will be determined through discussion with DEPI divisions and regions.
- Identify priority Action Statements to be completed in 2014-2015.

Year 2 (2014 – 2015):

Focus: Existing draft Action Statements and high priority new Action Statements and updating published Action Statements.

Outcomes:

- Finalise and publish draft Action Statements that were started in 2013-2014
- Revise, finalise and publish a number of existing draft Action Statements not addressed in 2013-2014.
- Commence drafting Action Statements for priority new items and review priority items with published Action Statements. The final number will be determined through discussion with DEPI divisions and regions.
- Identify priority Action Statements to be completed in 2015-2016

Year 3 (2015 – 2016):

Focus: Existing draft Action Statements, high priority new Action Statements and updating published Action Statements.

Outcomes:

- Finalise and publish any remaining draft Action Statements that were started in 2013-2014.
- Finalise and publish a number of remaining draft Action Statements that were started in 2014-2015.
- Revise, finalise and publish a number of existing draft Action Statements not addressed in the previous two years.
- Commence drafting Action Statements for priority new items and review priority items with published Action Statements. The final number will be determined through discussion with DEPI divisions and regions.
- Develop an implementation plan for the period post-2016.

Key Stakeholder engagement

The following table lists the key stakeholders and where they are engaged during Action Statement preparation. Some stakeholders will be consulted, and their advice considered. While for other key stakeholders, an agreement will be sought.

This is not a full list and other stakeholders will be identified when developing Action Statements. If any group wish to be included, they can contact DEPI or email threatened.species@depi.vic.gov.au.

Table 2 Key Stakeholders and the stage in Action Statement preparation when they are engaged.

Division/Agency	Action Statement stage
Victorian community	Informal consultation (species experts)
	Public consultation
Parks Victoria	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
	Public consultation
Catchment Management Authority	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
	Public consultation
Local government	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
Trust for Nature	Formal consultation
	Public consultation
VicForest	Formal consultation
	Public consultation
Environmental NGO's (TBD for individual Action Statement)	Informal consultation (species experts)
	Public consultation
Universities	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
	Public consultation
Knowledge and Decision Systems, Environment and Landscape Performance	Assignment
	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
Regulatory Strategy and Design, Environment and Landscape Performance	Approval and publish
	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
Arthur Rylah Institute	Assignment
	Informal consultation
	Agency/Divisional consultation
DEPI Regional Services	Assignment
	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation

	Assignment
Environment Policy Division, Land Fire and Environment	Informal consultation
	Formal consultation
	Approval and publish
Fire Management Policy, Land Fire and Environment	Formal consultation
Land Management Policy, Land Fire and Environment	Formal consultation
Water and Natural Resources	Formal consultation
Agricultural Productivity	Formal consultation
Biosecurity, Regulation and Compliance Division	Formal consultation
Fisheries, Regulation and Compliance Division	Formal consultation
Game and Forestry, Regulation and Compliance Division	Formal consultation
Emergency Planning and compliance, Regulation and Compliance Division	Formal consultation

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