

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP  
Minister for Environment and Climate Action  
Victorian Government  
Level 16  
8 Nicholson St  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

18 October 2022

Doc No: D22-490754

Dear Minister

**Re: Concerns relating to Serendip Sanctuary and You Yangs Regional Park**

I write on behalf of Council in relation to its resolution (attached) resulting from a Notice of Motion considered by the Greater Geelong City Council at its 27 September 2022 meeting. As per the resolution, Council requested that community concerns were raised in relation to Serendip Sanctuary and You Yangs Regional Park.

Council requested that concerns are raised to seek your urgent intervention to cease the removal of wildlife and captive fauna from Serendip Sanctuary; and to allocate appropriate funding to rehabilitate and ensure protection of Serendip Sanctuary wildlife and captive fauna population.

While the release of the You Yangs Precinct Master Plan in early February was greeted by the community with positive expectations and considerable excitement, particularly around the Serendip Sanctuary component, it has so far produced limited positive change.

The Sanctuary has continued its decline and deterioration which commenced several years ago, with infrastructure failing and now, native wildlife exhibits being removed. The combination of native free-range wildlife and exhibits of some rare and endangered birds and animals are the very essence of Serendips attraction to visitors.

The community recognises that staff are doing their best to manage the facilities in the current circumstances, however the lack of resources for general maintenance and lack of funding to deliver on the Master Plan continues to challenge the future of the Sanctuary.

The community is concerned that there is re-homing of common species held at Serendip in line with the Master Plan and its direction toward threatened species. It is understood that some of the emus, owls, tawny frog mouths, parrots and wallabies and most of the buff banded rails have now been moved to facilities in a number of zoos, where they can be better cared for, and compliance standards are maintained.

The concern that threatened species are being removed from the Sanctuary underlines the need for Parks Victoria to prioritise partnership opportunities that could cater for threatened species at the Sanctuary to retain it as a unique nature experience.

Native species are threatened by land clearing, habitat loss, urban sprawl, feral animal predation and devastating bushfires, all with dramatic losses to our native species. Now is not the time to reduce our commitment to saving our native species.

Wildlife visitation and observation plays a key role in visitor and community education by enabling people to understand the importance of wildlife and habitat protection.

Since the Notice of Motion was put at Council's September meeting, the community has also raised feedback relating to the opportunity to create a community-based advisory/working group to have an ongoing role in the implementation of the You Yangs Precinct Master Plan for at least the next 5 years. This group could consist of members of the community and council representation working closely with Parks Victoria in an advisory capacity, as a tangible and achievable community-based solution similar to existing precedents in other parts of the State.

Council is committed to working with the State Government to support the Master Plan for conservation, cultural heritage, tourism and recreation of the You Yangs Regional Park and Serendip Sanctuary and requests that urgent intervention is taken to cease the removal of wildlife and captive fauna from Serendip Sanctuary; and to allocate appropriate funding to rehabilitate and ensure protection of Serendip wildlife and captive fauna population.

If you require any further information please contact Gareth Smith, Director, City Planning and Economy, via phone 0421 057 997 or email [garethsmith@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:garethsmith@geelongcity.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**CR PETER MURRIHY**  
**MAYOR**  
**CITY OF GREATER GEELONG**

Attach: Notice of Motion – Cr Grzybek – Serendip and You Yangs – Request to Write to Minister

Copy To: Mr John Eren MP – Member for Lara, Victorian Government  
Ms Ella George – Australian Labor Party Candidate for Lara  
Mr Ralph Krein – Liberal Candidate for Lara  
Cr Courtney Gardner – Greens Candidate for Lara  
Mr Matthew Jackson, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Victoria  
Mr Jason Borg – Regional Director, Western Region, Parks Victoria  
Ms Jodi Heath – District Manager, Western Basalt, Parks Victoria