

January 2023

Part 1: Introduction

The translocation of threatened fauna can be an important component of conservation programs. Translocation can be used to establish or supplement captive breeding populations, to help accelerate population recovery in the wild or to enhance colonisation of suitable habitat by threatened taxa, or it can be used for research. In extreme cases, it may be the only method to prevent extinction or to establish new populations.

However, translocation programs need to be carefully planned, implemented, monitored and documented to ensure they have the highest chance of success and to maximise their contribution to conservation.

Legislative framework

All wildlife is protected in Victoria under the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Wildlife Act). Translocation of wildlife in Victoria can only be undertaken with an authorisation issued under the Wildlife Act.

Section 28A of the Wildlife Act enables the Secretary of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), or their delegate, to authorise various activities involving wildlife, including translocation, keeping and breeding of native wildlife, taking samples from or marking wildlife, or undertaking experimentation on wildlife, provided that the authorisation is necessary for, among other things, conservation, protection, research and management.

In addition to the Wildlife Act authorisation, translocation projects may also require other approvals, authorisations or permits, for example:

- animal ethics approval under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
- Victorian Planning Scheme permits
- Research Activity Access Agreements from Parks Victoria (these replace National Parks Act 1975 research permits)

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1989 permits
- import or export permits under the Wildlife Act and similar interstate legislation.

For more information about approvals, authorisations and permits, refer to **Part 3 - Applying to Translocate**.

All persons, including Department staff, involved in the handling or possession of threatened fauna must have the necessary approval, authorisation or permit.

Purpose

This Statement provides a clear decision-making and administrative framework for applications to translocate threatened fauna in Victoria. It establishes a process to assess the impacts and benefits of such activities, and to provide clear scientific advice on whether authorisations to translocate should be issued.

It is consistent with the *IUCN* position statement on translocation of living organisms 1987 and the 2013 *IUCN* guidelines for reintroductions and other conservation translocations.

Scope

This Statement applies to translocations of threatened native fauna into, out of or within Victoria for the purposes of biodiversity conservation or scientific research and includes all wild to wild, captive to wild and wild to captive movements (irrespective of whether the fauna is to be retained permanently or temporarily at captive facilities) and movements to and from confined populations.

The Statement is applicable to all government and nongovernment (including not-for-profit) individuals or organisations wishing to translocate threatened fauna.

It applies to:

 vertebrate fauna that are native to Australia and are either:



- listed¹ under Section 10 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG)
- listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)²; or
- included on other States' lists of threatened species²,³
- any terrestrial invertebrate animal which is listed under Section 10 of the FFG Act

and includes individuals, groups or populations of such fauna.

It does not apply to:

- fish within the meaning of the Fisheries Act 1995
- non-threatened vertebrate fauna i.e. vertebrate fauna species not listed under either Section 10 of the FFG Act, the EPBC Act or other States' lists of threatened species
- non-terrestrial invertebrates
- · terrestrial invertebrates that are not FFG-listed
- fauna not considered native to Australia, including domestic or feral animals.
- captive threatened fauna moved between licensed wildlife collections, zoos, wildlife parks or animal exhibitions where there is no intent to release the fauna or their progeny into the wild in the future
- threatened fauna moved by authorised disturbance programs undertaken by primary producers or government agencies for the purposes of asset protection (e.g. noise-makers to frighten birds or bats away from orchards)
- transfer of sick, injured, orphaned or abandoned wildlife to or from wildlife shelters within Victoria, and return of rehabilitated wildlife to the location where it was found.

Definitions

Taxon means a scientifically classified taxonomic group of any rank, for example a genus, species or subspecies.

Translocation means the deliberate human-assisted movement or removal of fauna from one locality and subsequent release either in the wild or in captivity or confinement at another locality. Note that the release site may be outside the State of Victoria. Translocation includes the following types of movement⁴:

- Population restoration the translocation of threatened fauna within its indigenous range⁵:
 - Reinforcement/supplementation: the intentional movement and release of threatened fauna into an existing population of conspecifics with the intent to enhance population viability.
 - Reintroduction: the intentional movement and release of threatened fauna into a part of its indigenous range from which it has disappeared.
- Introduction the intentional movement and release of threatened fauna outside its indigenous range:
 - Assisted colonisation: the intentional movement and release of threatened fauna outside its indigenous range to avoid extinction of populations.
 - Ecological replacement: the intentional movement and release of threatened fauna outside its indigenous range to perform a specific ecological function.
- Removal: the movement of threatened fauna from places where they are threatening human health and safety, amenity, built assets or natural or other values.

¹ See the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 Threatened List, at https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatenedspecies/threatened-list

For translocations of species that occur in Victoria and are listed under the EPBC Act in another State or are listed on another States' lists of threatened species but are not listed as threatened in Victoria, this procedure statement only applies if the species is being translocated to or from the state in which it is listed as threatened.

³ For translocations of non-Victorian species from captivity in Victoria to the wild in another state please contact the TEP

Secretariat for advice about whether a TEP application is required.

⁴ Translocation definitions from the *IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations* (IUCN/SSC (2013). Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations. Version 1.0. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Species Survival Commission).

⁵ The indigenous range of a species is the known or inferred distribution generated from historical records, or physical evidence of the species' occurrence.

- Salvage: the movement of fauna from places subject to habitat disturbance or loss or movement of threatened fauna into captivity in an effort to prevent a further decline in conservation status of a taxon.
- Experimental translocations: the translocation of selected threatened fauna for research.
- Emergency salvage i.e. unplanned or ad hoc translocation to a temporary or permanent holding location, triggered in response to events such as:
 - an environmental crisis e.g. fire, flood, habitat damage, drought
 - occurrence of a disease/pathogen /predator, where that may result in a population being lost, or the threatened taxon becoming more vulnerable
 - other event deemed by the TEP to be an emergency.

Translocation Plan means a Translocation Proposal that has been approved by the Conservation Regulator.

Translocation Proposal means a written statement of intent to carry out a translocation into, out of or within Victoria, covering all matters set out in Attachment 1, that has not yet been approved by the Conservation Regulator.

Translocation Evaluation Panel (TEP) means a panel of experts appointed by DEECA to provide advice to DEECA and the Conservation Regulator on Translocation Proposals.

Captive vs confined populations

The proliferation of fenced predator exclusion areas has blurred the boundaries between captive and wild populations. In the context of translocation proposals, the TEP has adopted the following definitions:

Confined population means a population in which movements of individuals are confined within a fenced area, but breeding is uncontrolled and/or animals forage for a majority or entirety of their diet.

Captive population means a confined population in which selected individuals are tagged for identification, breeding is controlled, or potentially so, and food is regimentally provided.

Part 2: Principles

DEECA will allow or undertake translocation of threatened fauna into, out of or within Victoria, for the

purposes of biodiversity conservation or scientific research, provided that:

- the translocation will promote the protection and conservation of the taxon (as per the objectives of the Wildlife Act)
- the removal of individuals from a source population is unlikely to pose a risk to that population (except in the case of salvage and emergency translocations)
- the taxon being translocated is likely to have no adverse impact, including the spread of disease or parasites, upon other fauna at the release site
- the factors which caused the taxon's extinction or limited its abundance at the release site have been identified and solved or are being actively managed now and into the foreseeable future (except in the case of experimental translocations which may be designed to test such hypotheses)
- the release site has confirmed suitable and sufficient habitat and other resources for the survival of the taxon (except in the case of experimental translocations which may be designed to test such hypotheses)
- where wild animals will be taken into captivity, the suitability of the captive facilities and the expertise of those managing the captive population will be considered.

Translocation of taxa to habitats or locations outside their known, historic or extrapolated natural range will not be approved unless there is an overriding conservation reason for so doing and that reason is supported by the TEP.

Part 3: Applying to translocate

To obtain authorisation to translocate threatened wildlife, applicants must apply to the Conservation Regulator for a scientific research or management permit under the Wildlife Act and develop a translocation proposal which must be reviewed by DEECA's Threatened Fauna Translocation Evaluation Panel (TEP).

This section describes the application process for obtaining an authorisation to translocate threatened fauna in Victoria. The process is summarised in Figures 1 and 2.

Step 1: Developing the proposal

As a first step, the applicant should consider the decision tree in **Figure 1** to determine whether or not the translocation is warranted.

Recovery team support

Where a recovery team⁶ or similar coordinating group exists for the taxon, the applicant should be the Chair of the recovery team or group, unless the proposal is for an experimental translocation, in which case the leader of the research project is the applicant.

If the Chair of the recovery team or group is not the applicant, then a letter of support for the translocation from the recovery team must be provided with the application.

DEECA regional support

The applicant **must** discuss the proposal with the DEECA Regional Manager Natural Environment Programs (or their delegate) in the relevant region prior to developing the translocation proposal to seek their in-principle support for the translocation. If the region provides in-principle support, a translocation proposal can be developed by the applicant and provided to the region to seek a formal letter of support for the translocation. The relevant region is based on the location of the source and recipient sites, if the sites are located in different DEECA regions, then support from each DEECA region is required. See **Appendix 1** for contact details.

The Natural Environment Programs team may be able to provide additional advice relevant to the proposal e.g.:

- whether the proposal aligns with regional, State or National priorities for threatened fauna management
- whether the proposal conflicts with relevant policy or legislation
- whether local Traditional Owner support for the proposal is required and how to seek that support
- whether there are any relevant community sensitivities or other issues that may interact with the proposal

 any other environmental information or requirements, e.g. any limitations associated with burning regimes including planned burns, conflicts with other projects or the habitat requirements of other species.

The DEECA region/s will provide feedback to the applicant within 28 days. The email/letter of support from the DEECA region/s must be provided to the TEP with the application.

Land manager support

The applicant must also discuss the proposal with the relevant land manager/s for the source and recipient sites (e.g. Parks Victoria, local council, landowner, Regional Roads Victoria etc.) and obtain written support for the proposed translocation of threatened fauna to or from land under their management responsibility. It is critical that land manager support is sought early in the development of the proposal to ensure that any concerns raised by the land manager can be addressed. The email/letter of support from the land manager/s must be provided to the TEP with the application.

For applications to translocate into or out of land managed by Parks Victoria, Parks Victoria's Director Conservation provide in-principle support for translocation proposals. Evidence of in-principle support from Parks Victoria must be provided to the TEP with the application. Final approval is provided by the Parks Victoria Executive Director Conservation and Planning following TEP support of the proposal. A Research Activity Access Agreement may also be needed.⁷ Contact Parks Victoria for more information at:

Mark Antos
Manager- Biodiversity Science
Environment and Science Directorate
Conservation and Planning Division
Parks Victoria
E: mark.antos@parks.vic.gov.au

If any of the required support is not given to the Translocation Proposal, it does not progress to the

https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/recovery-teams

⁷ Information about Research Activity Access Agreements is available at: https://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/scientific-research-permit/

TEP and must either be re-developed or not proceeded with.

Emergency translocations

Emergency translocations and emergency holdings of threatened fauna to save a taxon from imminent extinction or for welfare purposes may be approved by the Conservation Regulator while a Translocation Proposal is prepared.

Translocation Proposals for emergency translocations have reduced information requirements, please contact the TEP Secretariat for more information at: wildlife.policy@deeca.vic.gov.au.

All other translocations should be planned in accordance with the measures indicated above.

Salvage translocations of threatened fauna due to development

Proponents of development projects who anticipate that threatened fauna may be encountered during development (i.e. due to historical records of threatened species in the area) must consider how they will respond if threatened fauna is encountered during development, prior to the project commencing.

Translocation Proposals are required for all salvage translocations of threatened fauna due to development where the fauna is proposed to be moved over 100m from the capture site.

Translocation Proposals are not required where the fauna is proposed to be moved to suitable habitat within 100m of the capture site, provided the requirements below are met.

Regardless of the distance the fauna is proposed to be moved, the proponent must be confident that the release site provides good quality habitat for the species and sufficient resources for the number of individuals that may be translocated.

Consideration must also be given to the species' social organisation and whether the release site already supports a population of that species. For example, if the site is already occupied by that species, this may result in animal welfare issues for translocated individuals if the species is highly territorial, however, if the site is unoccupied, this may indicate a lack of resources or other issue at the site.

It is strongly recommended that expert advice is sought regarding the suitability of proposed release sites for the species, regardless of the distance the fauna is proposed to be moved.

If no suitable release site can be found, the collection of voucher specimens for submission to Museums Victoria should be considered.

Contact the TEP Secretariat for more information at: wildlife.policy@deeca.vic.gov.au

Step 2: Preparing the Translocation Proposal

Once a translocation proposal has in-principle agreement from the relevant DEECA region/s and the relevant land manager/s, the applicant is responsible for preparing and submitting a Translocation Proposal (using the template in **Attachment 1**) to the TEP.

The Translocation Proposal must be consistent with the requirements detailed in **Attachment 1** and provide sufficient information about the taxon and the proposed translocation for an informed decision to be made whether to approve or reject the proposal.

It should review relevant knowledge about the taxon's biology and ecology, its past and present distribution and conservation status, and the urgency of action. Information presented should be supported by references or data. Opinions expressed about aspects of the taxon's conservation biology should be clearly identified as such.

All Translocation Proposals must include (see **Attachment 1** for details):

- how the translocation will contribute to the broad conservation objectives for the species, for example actions in Recovery Plans
- a full risk assessment of all aspects of the translocation (including pre and post translocation activities)
- how identified risks will be managed and/or addressed
- a resourced monitoring program to assess the techniques used and the outcomes of the translocation
- quantitative short- and long-term indicators of success that will determine whether the translocation is successful
- a contingency plan that identifies how the proponent/s will respond should the indicators of success not be achieved

- written evidence of support for the proposed translocation from the relevant DEECA region/s
- written evidence of support from the land manager/s

and may also need to include:

- a letter of support from the recovery team or similar group for the taxon, where one exists and the Chair of the recovery team or group is not the applicant
- approval by a properly constituted Animal Ethics Committee, or evidence that approval it is being sought (see below)
- written evidence of support from local Traditional Owners (seek advice from the relevant DEECA region).

The Translocation Proposal must show that the translocation is part of an overall plan to manage the conservation of the taxon concerned, and that the risks will not compromise the taxon's conservation.

Animal ethics approvals

The requirements for animal ethics approvals are regulated by the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*. To determine whether you require ethics approval, please refer to the webpage of Animal Welfare Victoria:

https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/animals-used-in-research-and-teaching/licensing-to-use-animals-in-research-or-teaching/activities-requiring-a-licence.

This page describes the types of research activities that require a scientific procedures licence.

Forms can be downloaded from:

https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/animals-used-in-research-and-teaching/forms

Step 3: Submitting the Translocation Proposal

The completed Translocation Proposal can be submitted to the TEP Secretariat at:

wildlife.policy@deeca.vic.gov.au

The proposal must be received by the TEP no fewer than two weeks before the date of the next TEP meeting⁸. Applications received after this date will not be considered until the subsequent meeting.

Note: If the proponent requires emergency assessment outside the normal meeting schedule, they must justify the nature of the emergency in an email to the TEP Secretariat.

Authorisations, permits and approvals

To allow sufficient time for processing, at the same time as the Translocation Proposal is submitted to the TEP Secretariat, the applicant should also submit:

- an application for a Wildlife Act Research or Education and Management Permit to the Conservation Regulator⁹
- an application for a Research Activity Access Agreement to Parks Victoria, if the source or recipient site is located on land managed by Parks Victoria (e.g. in a National Park)¹⁰
- an application for an EPBC Act permit to the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, if required¹¹
- applications for other approvals or permits, as required (may include interstate permits).

Step 4: TEP assesses proposal on merit

The TEP will assess each Translocation Proposal to ensure that:

- it includes all relevant information as detailed in Attachment 1
- it is consistent with the principles outlined in this Statement
- risks to the source population have been fully considered e.g.
 - risks to the taxon due to removal of animals from the source population, by:
 - changed demographics or social structure
 - removal of genetic material

⁸ TEP meeting dates are available at: https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/managing-wildlife/translocationof-wildlife

⁹ Application forms for Wildlife Act permits are available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/research-permits

¹⁰ Information about Research Activity Access Agreements is available at: https://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/scientific-research-permit/

¹¹ Information about EPBC Act permits is available at: https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/permits-and-application-forms

- disturbance impacts to remaining individuals
- risks at the recipient site have been fully considered e.g.
 - o habitat related risks:
 - risk of translocation failure because the factors that caused the initial loss or decline of the taxon have not been understood or addressed
 - risk of translocation failure at the release site caused by predators or competitors
 - risk of translocation failure at the release site caused by parasites, pathogens or disease
 - inability of founders to find suitable resources at release site
 - risks to the translocated animals and/or conspecifics at the release site, as a result of genetic risks e.g. founder effects, inbreeding or outbreeding depression or genetic swamping
 - risks to the translocated animals and/or conspecifics at the release site, as a result of the population increasing above the carrying capacity of the recipient site (particularly for captive or confined populations)
 - risks to other taxa at the release site, both plants and animals
 - hygiene related risks i.e. introduction of pest plants or animals via transportation of the translocated taxon
 - o risks to the protection of the site i.e.
 - failure to control predators
 - failure to keep the translocated animals at the site
 - impacts on the translocated animals of incompatible land management activities
 - impacts of the translocated animals on current land management activities at the release site
- appropriate project management has been considered i.e.
 - the necessary long-term timeframe required in both personnel and finances to support and evaluate the translocation has been acknowledged and accounted for
 - key stakeholders and, where relevant, recovery teams and key experts, have been consulted,

- including with respect to both source and release locations
- a monitoring and evaluation program is in place to track and assess the program's success and the effectiveness of management strategies applied, with clear short- and long-term indicators of success outlined
- a contingency plan has been prepared and can be enacted if early losses occur, indicators of success are not met or if the translocation has unintended negative effects
- o the proposal is feasible and workable.

Incomplete proposals or proposals requiring revision

If a Translocation Proposal is not complete or provides insufficient information for the TEP to make a determination, the applicant will be notified by the TEP Secretariat and requested to provide more detail and/or to revise the Translocation Proposal as needed.

All amendments to the Translocation Proposal must be clearly identified using track changes. The revised Translocation Proposal and responses to the TEP's questions or comments should be emailed to the TEP Secretariat and will be considered by the TEP out of session.

If further information is required by the TEP it is the responsibility of the translocation applicant to provide this information at their own cost.

Timing of TEP advice

The TEP will strive to provide a recommendation on the Translocation Proposal within six weeks of the date of the TEP meeting, however, time taken to receive further detail or amendments to the Translocation Proposal from the proponent may result in this timeline not being met.

Step 5: TEP advises the Conservation Regulator

The TEP provides advice to the Conservation Regulator regarding its view of the proposal via a letter.

The TEP Secretariat will provide the TEP's letter of advice to the Conservation Regulator with a brief summarising the proposal and identifying any potential issues. The brief will be endorsed by the delegate of the Executive Director, Biodiversity Division, DEECA and will provide a recommendation to the Conservation Regulator about whether the proposal should be approved and an authorisation to undertake the translocation be issued.

The Conservation Regulator will consider this advice and may ask for additional clarification before making a decision on the application.

Step 6: Conservation Regulator assesses the proposal

Before making a decision under the Wildlife Act or the FFG Act, the Conservation Regulator will consider:

- the advice of the TEP
- the recommendation in the brief from Biodiversity Division, DEECA
- information provided in the Wildlife Act Research or Education and Management Permit application
- any other information relevant to the application.

The Conservation Regulator may also confirm that the support of the land manager/s has been granted, and that any additional authorisations or approvals needed have been sought (e.g. Animal Ethics Committee approval, Research Activity Access Agreements, EPBC Act approvals).

Where further authorisations or approvals are required, the Conservation Regulator will advise the proponent to apply for them.

If the proposal is not approved, the Conservation Regulator will notify the applicant of the decision in writing.

Step 7: Conservation Regulator issues permits

If the proposal is approved, an authorisation permit under the Wildlife Act for the translocation will be issued by the Conservation Regulator and will be emailed to the Applicant.

The authorisation will specify conditions under which the proposed activities must be conducted.

Step 8: Implementation

Upon receipt of the Wildlife Act permit (and other relevant authorisations or approvals), the applicant may commence the translocation in accordance with their approved Translocation Plan and any other conditions of the permit/s.

Step 9: Reporting

Provision of reports on the progress and outcomes of the translocation, as stated in the Translocation Plan, will be a condition of the Wildlife Act permit. A reporting template be provided with the permit.

Reports must be submitted to: environmental.research@deeca.vic.gov.au at least annually for the duration of the project.

Copies of reports submitted to the Conservation Regulator will be forwarded to the TEP and relevant DEECA regions.

Amendments to approved Translocation Plans

If an amendment to an approved Translocation Plan is needed during the life of the project (e.g. changes to the number of animals being translocated, changes to source or recipient sites, staffing changes etc.), the TEP may need to consider the revised Translocation Plan and provide advice to the Conservation Regulator on whether the changes should be approved and a revised Wildlife Act permit issued.

Please notify the TEP Secretariat and the Conservation Regulator of the proposed changes so that advice can be provided about the steps that will need to be taken, depending on the changes proposed.

The TEP Secretariat can be contacted at: wildlife.policy@deeca.vic.gov.au

The Conservation Regulator can be contacted at: environmental.research@deeca.vic.gov.au

Expired permits

Wildlife Act permits can be issued for a period of up to three years. It is important to note the expiry date of the permit so that the permit does not expire before the project has been completed. If the permit expires then no further translocations can be undertaken.

Permits cannot be renewed if the permit has expired, a new application will be required.

If the permit is likely to expire before the project has been completed, please contact the Conservation Regulator at the email address above for advice.

Figure 1: Decision Tree for Translocation of Threatened Native Fauna

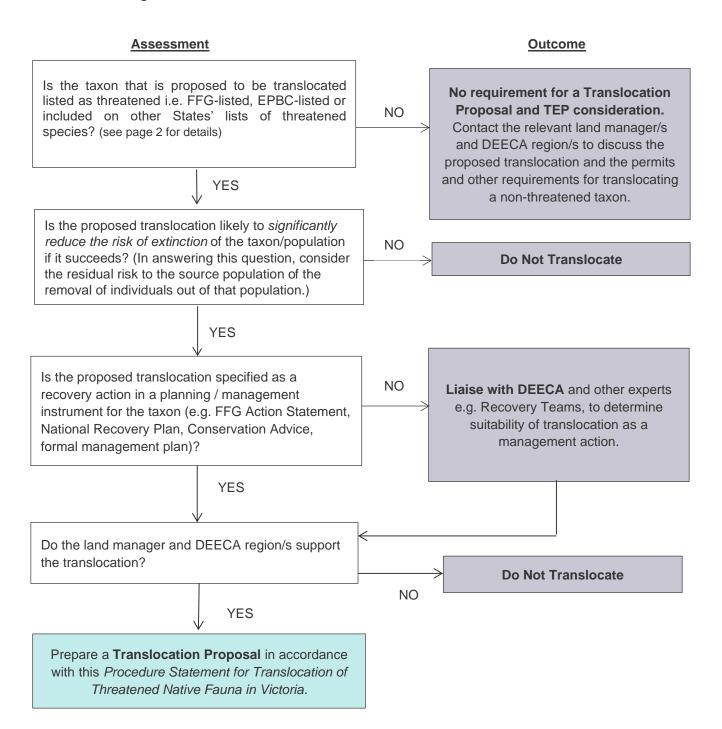
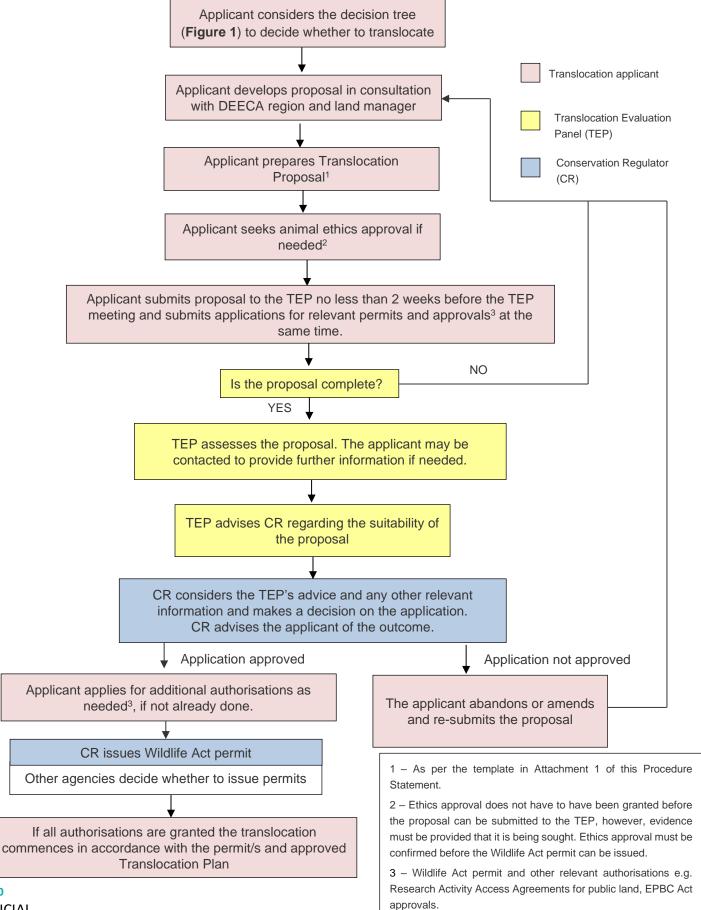


Figure 2: Summary of the application process for authority to translocate threatened native fauna in Victoria



Appendix 1 DEECA regional contacts

DEECA Port Phillip

Regional Manager, Natural Environment Programs 123 Brown Street Heidelberg, Victoria, 3084 Phone: (03) 9450 8600

DEECA Barwon South West (South West)

Regional Manager, Natural Environment Programs 30 -38 Little Malop Streets Geelong VIC 3220 (03) 5226 4667

DEECA Grampians (South West)

Regional Manager, Natural Environment Programs 402 Mair Street, Ballarat VIC 3350 Ph. (03) 5336 6856

DEECA Loddon Mallee (North West)

Regional Manager, Natural Environment Programs 1 -7 Taylor Street Epsom VIC 3551 (03) 5430 4444

DEECA Hume (North East)

Regional Manager, Natural Environment Programs 89 Sydney Road Benalla, VIC 3672 (03) 5761 1611

DEECA Gippsland

Regional Manager, Natural Environment Programs 574 Main St Bairnsdale VIC 3885 (03) 5152 0600

Please refer to **Figure 3** for regional boundaries.

Figure 3 – DEECA regional boundaries

