**Frequently Asked Questions about Implementing Biodiversity 2037 and Progress Reports**

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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| 1. What are contributing targets? | Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037 (Biodiversity 2037) establishes state-wide targets of:  On average, a 100% net positive ‘[Change in Suitable Habitat](https://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/corporate-plan/healthy,-resilient-and-biodiverse-environment)’ (CSH) in 50 years for threatened species, and a net improvement in the outlook across all species by 2037, as measured by CSH, with the expected outcomes being:   * That no vulnerable or near-threatened species will have become endangered. * That all critically endangered and endangered species will have at least one option available for being conserved ex situ or re-established in the wild (where feasible under climate change) should they need it. * A net gain of the overall extent and condition of habitats across terrestrial, waterway and marine environments.   The ‘contributing targets’ were developed to provide guidance on the level of effort required to achieve these state-wide outcome targets. The contributing targets provide guidance on the types, amounts (in hectares) and focus areas of common landscape-scale management actions likely to be needed over the 20-year period of the Plan. These targets were developed with the guidance of modelling from the [Strategic Management Prospects](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/natureprint) (SMP) decision-support tool.  In most cases, the contributing targets rely on management actions being undertaken in ‘priority locations’, which are determined through SMP analysis as the highest ranked areas (generally the top 10%) within which to cost-effectively undertake particular management actions.  The models underpinning SMP will continually be improved and regularly updated. The Biodiversity 2037 contributing targets will be reviewed and updated every five years and additional contributing targets may be added. |
| 2. How were the Biodiversity 2037 targets developed? | The targets identified in Biodiversity 2037 were developed and tested during consultation on the draft plan, primarily in 2016. Some of the targets were informed by modelling available through the [Strategic Management Prospects](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/natureprint) (SMP) decision-support tool.  The draft targets were subsequently considered by a dedicated Science Reference Group and other stakeholder processes with feedback incorporated into the final version of Biodiversity 2037 that was released in 2017.  The Biodiversity 2037 contributing targets will be reviewed and updated every five years and additional contributing targets may be added. |
| 3. Why does progress towards the Biodiversity 2037 targets seem so slow? | Progress against the targets is expected to be slower in the early years but become faster over time. This is due to two main reasons:   1. The science tells us that working together to concentrate our efforts into priority places and actions is the most efficient and effective way of stopping biodiversity decline in the next 20 years. In some cases, this means adjusting where and/or how we work, sometimes bolstering existing programs and sometimes altering our focus to new actions or new locations. These changes affect all of us to some degree – government, non-government, community, etc – and it will take time before these changes take effect and the benefits realised.   To illustrate this:   * + The total program of pest predator control across Victoria in 2020 was more than 2.1 million hectares (ha) of which 865,328 ha was in priority locations and reportable against the Biodiversity 2037 target of 1.5 million ha.   + Likewise in 2020 there was 9,135 ha of revegetation since 2017, of which 74 ha was in the priority locations for habitat connectivity. This is not surprising since revegetation is funded and undertaken for other reasons (such as erosion control, water quality) than just critical biodiversity needs.  1. When it comes to reporting progress against the targets, we rely on organisations who participate in biodiversity management to share their data with us about which action/s they are undertaking and where. This is a new practice for many, which has not yet been universally adopted, with the result that there currently may be a degree of under reporting. DELWP will continue to support stakeholders to contribute relevant data for reporting on Biodiversity 2037 targets.   For further information about how to provide the right data for Biodiversity 2037 reporting, see [Activity Data](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/activity-data).  DELWP will provide updates on progress against these targets on a regular basis as information becomes available. |
| 4. Why is there a difference in the hectares reported between the 2018 and 2019 progress reports? | Reporting for the Biodiversity 2037 targets relies on collection of accurate spatial data from organisations that undertake on-ground biodiversity work. This spatial data is represented by GIS polygons, measured in hectares, that describe where and what type of management activity has been undertaken within that polygon area.    The 2018 progress report on the Biodiversity 2037 targets used broad management areas provided by each organisation which typically lacked specificity about the extent of on-ground activities actually undertaken.  For example:   * Some activities were recorded as occurring uniformly across a large management area but where the actual on-ground works were limited to specific locations within that large management area; or * Some, but not all elements of a threat were managed, for example, where weed control was undertaken, but only one of numerous high-threat weed species was controlled.   This approach, using partial threat management data, over-estimated the total hectares of activity undertaken.    In contrast, the 2019 and 2020 reports have been generated using more accurate spatial polygon areas that represent where the on-ground works have actually occurred.  This approach provides a more conservative estimate of the progress made towards achieving the Biodiversity 2037 Plan targets. Future reports are also expected to report only hectares of ‘full’ management areas to identify progress.  We will continue to improve our data standards and guidance materials for stakeholders reporting on-ground management actions to ensure reporting is as accurate as possible. |
| 5. What is ‘Change in Suitable Habitat’ and how does it relate to the Biodiversity 2037 contributing targets? | Change in Suitable Habitat (CSH) is an area-based measure developed for Biodiversity 2037. It is being used to quantify expected progress toward the environmental outcome targets in Biodiversity 2037. In this context, suitable habitat includes the type, extent and configuration of habitat for a species, and the factors that influence how much a species can make use of this habitat.  CSH is the increase in the likelihood that a species will persist at a location in 50 years' time in response to sustained management of relevant threats. It is an estimate of the expected long-term difference between action and no action. CSH therefore represents the change between two future scenarios - it is **not**a comparison between now (current suitable habitat) and 50 years' time (expected future suitable habitat).  All conservation actions undertaken by community, non-government organisations and government agencies can contribute to CSH. But aligning actions more closely to the priority locations for each action is the most cost-effective way to increase CSH where this will maximise the overall benefit. The contributing targets indicate the amount of effort necessary to achieve the state-wide outcome targets over the 20-year life of the Biodiversity 2037 Plan, based on modelling from the [Strategic Management Prospects](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/natureprint) (SMP) decision-support tool. |
| 6. What does a ‘net loss’ of native vegetation mean? | Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037 (Biodiversity 2037) confirms the Victorian Government’s ‘net gain’ goal for terrestrial native vegetation, to be achieved through investment and other efforts by government, community and land managers. This is nested within broader Biodiversity 2037 targets including a ‘net gain’ of overall extent and condition of native habitats across terrestrial, waterway and marine environments.  Current data on net gain accounting only relates to terrestrial native vegetation. Net gain is achieved where overall gains outweigh losses. Net loss is where losses are more than gains. The unit of measurement is Habitat Hectares (HHa) which is a combined measure of native vegetation extent and condition.  Calculation of gains and losses includes things like:   * Gain activities – government investment programs, work by community or land managers to control weeds or pest animals, conservation covenants on private land. * Loss activities – entitled uses and exemptions from native vegetation permits and offsetting, unmanaged threats beyond legal obligations. * Neutral activities – native vegetation permits and offsetting, wildfire and regeneration.   The largest contributors to the current 8200 HHa annual net loss of native vegetation are unmanaged threats beyond legal obligations (e.g. environmental weeds), entitled uses (e.g. stock grazing) and clearing that is exempt from requiring a permit (e.g. fences, fire prevention works). |
| 7. How can I contribute information towards the Biodiversity 2037 targets? | There are several pathways available to contribute information to count towards the Biodiversity 2037 targets.  For further information, see [Activity Data](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/activity-data). |
| 8. Why is ‘Change in Suitable Habitat’ not included in the 2018, 2019 and 2020 progress reports? | There is currently insufficient coverage of Change in Suitable Habitat (CSH) assessments to report meaningfully across total conservation progress.  CSH will be included in future reporting, including more species-specific views, as soon as more data is available. |