



## Mick Gentleman MLA

Minister for the Environment and Heritage  
Minister for Planning and Land Management  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services  
Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries  
Manager of Government Business

Member for Brindabella

Dear Attendees

I'm sorry I wasn't able to make it to the Bees, Butterflies, Birds: Maximising Biodiversity by Supporting Pollinators Forum.

The need to support our local pollinator fauna is greater than ever. Their importance for food production, their medicinal properties, their intrinsic value as living beings and the critical role they play in maintaining a healthy environment means that we must act now to ensure the survival of healthy pollinator populations into the future.

Pollinators, including insects and birds, are an important part of our living environment, promoting ongoing diversity and persistence of our native flora, and play a vital role in the production of our foods. Pollinators also have cultural significance. Native bees have played an important part of our Indigenous heritage for thousands of years, providing nourishment and medicinal benefits. European bees have been a valuable companion to many different European cultures throughout history. Some of our threatened plant species even have specific pollinators, such as the critically endangered and endemic Canberra Spider Orchid, which is pollinated by a single species of wasp.

Unfortunately, our pollinators are in peril across the globe. Pollinator populations have collapsed because of anthropogenic stressors such as the loss of habitat, fragmentation, pollution and pesticides, disease and climate change. We can expect warmer, longer summers, increased heat waves, harsher drought conditions and increased risk of bushfires.

These last few months have been extraordinarily challenging as we face the most extreme drought and bushfires our country has ever seen. The extent of habitat burnt throughout this summer has had enormous impacts on life, property and the, including our important pollinator fauna. We must act quickly to support our unique fauna and flora and we are drawing heavily from Canberra's collective expertise and willingness to help. A post-fire recovery team has been compiled to assess post-fire recovery needs in the environment. The rapid risk assessment team specialises in fire impact assessment for threatened species, habitat, water quality, cultural assets, and identifying threats from rain such as debris flows.

We will continue to work with experts and the wider community and take the steps necessary to support healthy ecosystems and local pollinators.

Yours sincerely

Mick Gentleman MLA  
Minister for Environment and Heritage

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