



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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LANDOWNER PAYS OUT FOR STRIPED LEGLESS LIZARD

A landowner near Cressy, Victoria, will pay \$20,000 to conservation programs after he developed land that was habitat for the threatened striped legless lizard.

The payment is part of an enforceable undertaking accepted under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Department compliance and enforcement manager Rose Webb said it was the first time an enforceable undertaking had been accepted since being added as an enforcement option to the EPBC Act in February 2007.

“The negotiated outcome was an alternative option to court action and is one of a number of enforcement tools available under the Act,” Ms Webb said.

“This is a good outcome for the environment, which is our main priority. However, it’s unfortunate that by developing native grasslands for cropping purposes, the landowner has destroyed important habitat for the threatened striped legless lizard.

“Sadly, this habitat can’t be recovered, but the landowner accepted that he’d made a mistake and was keen to work with the department to find an outcome which would go some way to helping the lizard.

“In choosing this path, we’ve also avoided an adversarial court process and ensured that the money goes back into the environment.”

The landowner will pay the \$20,000 sum over a four-year period. The payment will go towards striped legless lizard conservation programs run by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, on behalf of the National Recovery Team.

The landowner has also agreed to put up fencing on his property to create a habitat corridor for the striped legless lizard.

“Once these things are gone, they are irretrievable and we take these offences very seriously,” Ms Webb said.

“It’s very important that people seek Federal Government approval for any activities likely to have a significant impact on nationally protected species and native grassland ecological communities.

“If unsure, it’s best to check.”

To find out more about getting Federal Government environmental approval, visit www.environment.gov.au/epbc/approval.html

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