

Our reference : DOC08/6660
Contact : David O'Toole, (02) 9995 5493

14 February 2008

To whom it may concern,

Application by Waterfall Springs Conservation Association Incorporated for funding under the Regional Partnerships Program

I am pleased to write on behalf of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) in support of the Regional Partnerships Program grant application being submitted by Waterfall Springs Conservation Association Incorporated (WSCA) to enable the expansion and improvement of its existing Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (BTRW) captive breeding operating and education facilities. The criteria of the Regional Partnerships Program under which WSCA is seeking funding include "improving access to services" and "helping communities make structural adjustments".

The BTRW is a declared endangered species in NSW under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, and its conservation and management are currently facilitated across the state through the NSW BTRW recovery team, DECC staff and the NSW Fox Threat Abatement Plan. A Recovery Plan for this species in NSW is soon to be finalised. This plan identifies a suite of recovery actions, of which one of the most critical is the establishment of a captive breeding program. The program aims to provide animals for release into priority BTRW populations in NSW and to act as an insurance population in case of catastrophic declines in the wild. Of all the captive facilities taking part in the captive breeding program, WSCA will play the greatest role by far and will hold the majority of breeding groups. The large natural enclosures at WSCA play an important role in ensuring successful reproduction in this species, and in preparing animals for eventual release into the wild.

DECC has been working with the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA) who have extensive experience in BTRW captive breeding and are able to coordinate breeding programs to meet the requirements of the recovery team. This successful working relationship has extended to WSCA, a respected member institution of ARAZPA. WSCA has been particularly pro-active in seeking expert advice from a wide range of sources (including the NSW recovery team) in order to develop facilities suitable for its captive breeding program. The proposed expansion work will enable WSCA to better meet the requirements of ARAZPA for holding separate breeding groups, and "spare males" required for genetic mixing to ensure a genetically robust captive population. A grant under the Regional Partnerships Program will assist WSCA to expand and improve its existing operating facilities and progress the current program to enable it to fulfil identified priority recovery actions. Unfortunately, DECC is unable to support the project financially, but it fully endorses the work undertaken by WSCA.

As well as helping to deliver direct outcomes for the conservation and management of BTRW, WSCA provides a unique opportunity to promote BTRW conservation in the Central Coast area and create a valuable resource to educate students and community volunteers. The community interest generated by the WSCA increases the profile of this threatened species and ultimately encourages and assists landholders to manage their lands with threatened species conservation

The Department of Environment and Conservation NSW is now known as
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in mind. A grant will enable onsite education and research facilities to be improved and assist WSCA in continuing this important work.

Please do not hesitate to contact David O'Toole on (02) 9995 5493 if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,



Linda Bell
Head, Biodiversity Conservation Unit
Department of Environment and Climate Change

