



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**THREATENED SPECIES DAY**  
**FRIENDS OF THE HELMETED HONEYEATER RECEPTION**  
**Tuesday 7 September 2021**

**Alan Clayton** President of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, and **Committee Members**  
**Distinguished guests**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land from which I am speaking to you, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders gathered with us.

I am delighted to be celebrating with you the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helmeted Honeyeater having been declared as Victoria's avifaunal emblem.

Of course I wish that we were together 'in real life', but I am grateful for the fallback that technology enables so that the celebration need not be lost.

And as Patron of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, I am especially pleased that we are celebrating on National Threatened Species Day – a day that helps raise awareness of the animals and plants at risk of extinction.

I realise I don't need to tell anyone here about two specific things.

One is just how attractive and charming a bird we have as Victoria's emblem.

The other is the risk that it faces, as a critically endangered bird.

And sadly, it is only one of the many threatened species in Victoria. Amongst them, we see the Leadbeater's Possum, our State's faunal emblem. And the Weedy Seadragon, our State's marine animal emblem, is presently classified as 'near threatened', with concerns it is dying out in some areas.

And while these are just some of the many threatened plants and creatures around the world, they illustrate the importance of protecting species through the restoration of habitat, recovery and breeding programs, advocacy and raising awareness.

For more than 30 years, the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater have made an invaluable contribution to the survival of this little bird. Your clear focus on the three pillars of 'healthy place', 'healthy bird', and 'healthy organisation' have enabled the bird's population to grow. In fact, since 2013 alone, it's small population has tripled.

A tremendous achievement.

That leaves me only to say thank you to everyone involved in that.

Thank you to the small cohort of staff and the very many volunteers for your work, which has been recognised with a range of awards.

In particular, thank you to Robert Anderson OAM, founding President, to the organisation's life member, to the current President of the Committee of Management, Alan Clayton and finally to Gaye Gadsden, the first Environmental Coordinator and Nursery Manager, whom I understand is now stepping back from her role.

Thank you to the generous donors, philanthropists and participating private landowners as well.

We know too that there are many other organisations and bodies who have partnered with Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater. I do want to mention Zoos Victoria which has, since 1989, conducted a successful recovery program.

I am fortunate to have visited and learned about the program, both at Healesville and in the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve (which I have also enjoyed visiting to see the birds in situ).

I know just how much your work matters, and wish the Friends well in all their continuing efforts to support the Helmeted Honeyeater.

I will look forward to hearing from some of your members shortly.