

WRITE TO VIC & FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO SAVE RARE ORCHID

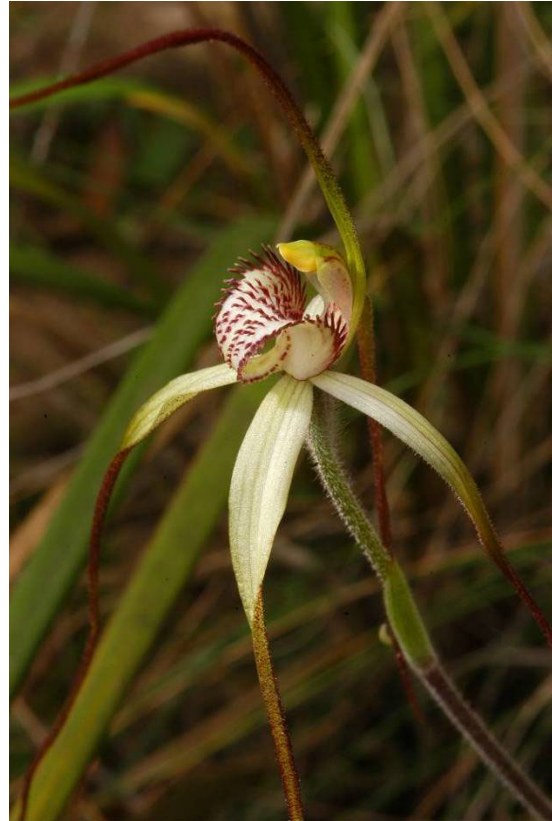
Photo © Matthew Dell

Please urgently call upon federal and state parliamentarians to live up to their legislative responsibilities to save the beautiful *Kilsyth South Spider-orchid* from extinction.

The orchid is possibly the world's rarest species of plant or animal. The total global population is about twenty individuals on a single, privately owned vacant block at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges.

The property has recently been put up for sale. This is the first opportunity since the orchid was discovered in 1991 for government to purchase the orchid's habitat and add it to an abutting bushland reserve. The orchid is in great peril of extinction under private ownership, but the state and federal government appear unlikely to try to negotiate a purchase unless pushed by their electors.

In a legal case in 1999, the [Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#) (VCAT) directed that the property where the orchid grows could not be used for a proposed house. The Tribunal stated that *'any form of development would be detrimental to the conservation values of the site. In the circumstances we believe that a fair next step would see the subject site publicly acquired'*.



The Victorian government has also committed itself to *'Pursue voluntary acquisition of the property'* as a key element of its [Action Statement](#) for the Kilsyth South Spider-orchid under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act*. At the federal level, the species is listed as 'critically endangered' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This Act requires the federal government to 'recover' the species, which they have found impossible to even begin to do while the habitat is in private ownership.

According to ecologist, Dr Graeme Lorimer, 'We have a situation where no private purchaser could do anything with the land and two governments have strong obligations to bring the land into public ownership. If neither government steps in to negotiate, what could possibly be a satisfactory alternative?'

Help push the politicians into action. Write today to any or all of the following and ask them to make a genuine effort to negotiate reservation of the spider-orchid's habitat.

Victorian Minister for the Environment – The Honourable Gavin Jennings MLC, e-mail gavin.jennings@parliament.vic.gov.au, phone 9096 8830, Level 22 / 50 Lonsdale Street, Melb.

Federal Minister for the Environment – The Honourable Peter Garrett AM MP, e-mail peter.garrett.mp@aph.gov.au, phone (02) 6277 7640, PO Box 6022, Canberra ACT 2600.

The State Labor MLA for the orchid's electorate (Monbulk) – The Honourable James Merlino, e-mail james.merlino@parliament.vic.gov.au, phone 9761 0983.

Federal electorate: Casey – The Honourable Tony Smith MP (Liberal). e-mail tony.smith.mp@aph.gov.au, phone 9724 9222.

Your local State and Federal parliamentarians.

There is also a petition (which is less influential than writing).

For further information

Contact ecologist, Dr Graeme Lorimer: phone (03) 8711 3454 or 0403 229 862 or Margaret Baber (coordinator of Maroondah Bushlinks), phone (03) 9876 3094.