



Media Release

From the Department of Sustainability and Environment

Monday 19 March 2007

FOX NUMBERS THE TARGET OF EXPANDED BAITING PROGRAM

The number of foxes in the Lake Mokoan area has significantly reduced following the expansion of a successful community-based baiting program.

For the first time, the Lake Mokoan precinct has been included in the Warby Range Landcare Group Carpet Python Project fox baiting program.

“Foxes pose the greatest threat to the survival of the endangered Carpet Python,” Department of Primary Industries project coordinator, Janice Mentiplay-Smith, said.

“The extension of the baiting program to include Lake Mokoan, will certainly have a positive impact on the future of this important species.”

“The Carpet Python is a non-venomous snake that grows up to three metres long and is found exclusively in the Warby Ranges and Chesney Vale areas,” she said.

Ms Mentiplay-Smith said the project is funded by the Conservation Management Network and assists landholders in the project area to gain their Australian Chemical Users Permit and lay the baits.

“Seventy landholders are participating in this year’s baiting program which is fantastic.

“In addition, DSE and Goulburn-Murray Water have provided funding for a local contractor to lay baits around the lake during the same time to complement the works.”

Already more than 100 of the 187 bait stations have been taken on the south side of the lake.

“The presence of foxes has certainly been reduced since the baiting program began, which is great news for the Carpet Python and local landholders,” Ms Mentiplay-Smith said.

“Last year saw a 66 percent reduction in the numbers of foxes in the project area following the completion of the program,” she said.

The Warby Range Landcare Group initiated the project in 2005 to try and secure the longterm survival of the python.

“Collaboration between the community and Government is ideal as it ensures that the programs are complementary to each other and in this case, fox numbers are reduced.”

The Warby Range Landcare Group, DPI, DSE and Parks Victoria support the project.

For further information about the Warby Range Landcare group Carpet Python Project, contact Janice Mentiplay-Smith on (03) 57 611 644.