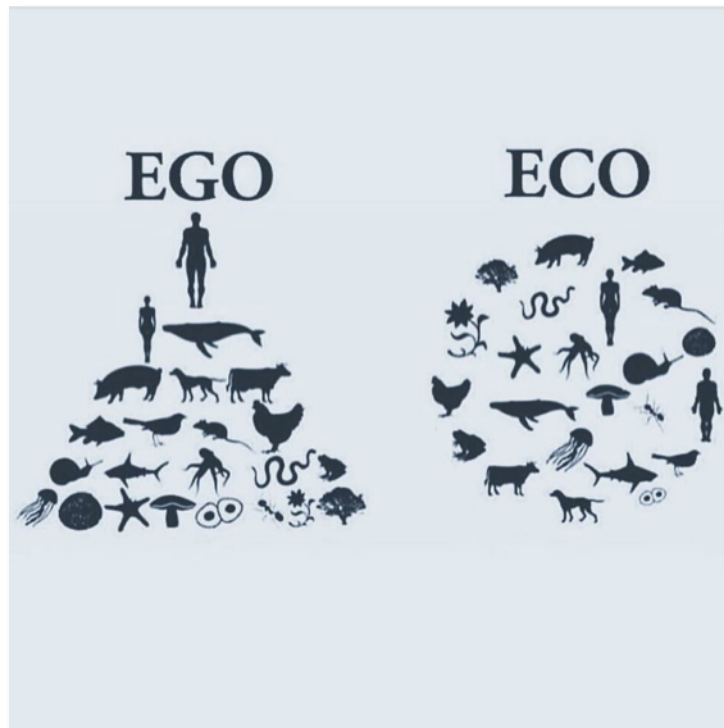


WHY ARE SNAKES IMPORTANT TO HUMANS?

Balanced ecosystem



With the continuous destruction of habitat for animals to make way for the growing human population it is imperative that we do all we can to preserve Australia's fauna. Killing snakes unbalances the natural order of things and allows the animals that snakes prey on to multiply, similarly for the animals that feed on snakes, it depletes their food source.

Maintaining biodiversity is important to all life on Earth, including humans, and snakes are an important part of that biodiversity. In Australia, we forget that snakes and other reptiles make up a significant proportion of the middle-order predators that keep our natural ecosystems working.

Pest Control



Snakes are nature's best pest control. They have an integral role in keeping the number of introduced rats and mice at bay. These rodents carry disease and destroy crops. Many people remove harmless Carpet Pythons or kill Brown Snakes only to learn they have just gotten rid of their best rat trap.

One Australian snake in particular, the Australian Keelback has adapted to feed on the introduced Cane Toad. Cane Toads have a devastating effect on our natural ecosystem and it is vital we keep these snakes around.

Venom used in medicine



It seems ironic that the very substance that has the potential to kill us also has the potential to save our lives. Scientists have been studying the medicinal properties of various snake venoms for decades. For example, certain snake venom has been shown to have anti-tumor properties, others have antibacterial and pain relieving properties.

Hemotoxins in snake venom target the circulatory system, and typically attack the body's clotting ability and muscles, but scientists have also found ways to use hemotoxins for medicine - such as treating heart attacks and blood disorders. Other drugs have been developed from neurotoxins in snake venom, which are used to treat Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, as well as stroke and brain injuries. More research will need to be done to better understand the medicinal properties of these toxins so it's important for future generations to keep snakes around.