

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



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PRESERVING OUR WILDERNESS SO MORE PEOPLE CAN ENJOY IT

The Andrews Labor Government is protecting Victoria's beautiful natural environment and ensuring more people can enjoy it, with major investments in our much-loved parks and Zoos, and funding to protect biodiversity across the state.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* invests \$474 million to protecting vulnerable wilderness and improving visitor facilities so more people can get out and enjoy Victoria's natural wonders.

The Budget invests more than \$80 million for better visitor facilities at iconic locations across Victoria, including the Grampians National Park, Alpine National Park, Cape Conran Coastal Park, the Mallacoota Inlet and at the Point Hicks Lighthouse near the Croajingolong National Park.

This includes \$23 million which will build a new visitors centre at Wilsons Promontory, and establish a 50,000-hectare biodiversity sanctuary, with a predator proof fence to protect the Park's unique and abundant wildlife, including its threatened species.

An additional \$47.5 million will go towards better visitor infrastructure along the Great Ocean road, including the first three stages of a signature coastal walking trail along the coastline and hinterland from Fairhaven to Skenes Creek, with up to five new swing suspension bridges providing spectacular views of Victoria's rugged surf coast.

Funding of \$52 million will also go to Parks Victoria to upgrade sites at Albert Park, Braeside Park, Brimbank Park, Dandenong Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, Organ Pipes, Plenty Gorge, Point Cook, and other locations around the state – delivering new walking trails, new picnic tables and new barbecues.

And \$10 million will improve water quality, protect critically endangered species, and boost tourism opportunities at the Yellingbo Conservation Area to for the community.

\$29 million will continue the critical work of the Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program, which is restoring and protecting vast areas of wilderness impacted by the summers' fires – controlling invasive weeds and feral animals, protecting threatened species and creating jobs in fire affected communities.

The Budget invests \$48 million to deliver environmental programs including community action to protect Victorian plants and animals, the ongoing management of Port Philip Bay and the vital work of Landcare.

The Budget will deliver \$92.3 million to restore land and plant four million trees across more than 6,000 hectares to store carbon in our landscape.

To transform Werribee Zoo into Australia's leading open-range zoo, the Budget delivers \$84 million to build a new home for the much-loved Asian elephant herd, currently housed at Melbourne Zoo, and make other vital upgrades.

More than \$6 million will continue the Wild Dog Control program across Gippsland and north-east Victoria.

The Labor Government will also invest \$16 million prepare and protect our coast from climate change through research, policy and on the ground action, including local planting and erosion prevention.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're protecting our beautiful environment and making it easier for more people to get out and enjoy it."

"These are vital investments in conservation that will not only protect the biodiversity that underpins the health of Victoria's environment but also take carbon out of our atmosphere, an important step in fighting climate change."