

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



Sunday, 10 January 2021

PROTECTING OUR ICONIC PLATYPUS

The Victorian Government is taking urgent action to protect the platypus with the global icon now officially a threatened species and listed as vulnerable in Victoria.

An initial cash injection of \$250,000 will go immediately towards restoration works at key habitat sites while a further \$50,000 will be used to develop a long-term action plan to ensure the future of the unique mammal.

This follows the Government's approval of a Scientific Advisory Council recommendation to formally list the platypus population in Victoria as vulnerable.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio will in March convene a state-wide forum of experts to help support existing platypus conservation work as well as identifying new opportunities.

The Platypus Management Plan will guide longer term investment in research and monitoring, habitat protection and restoration and population augmentation including re-populating suitable rivers and creeks and enhancing genetic diversity through translocation.

Many platypus populations in Victoria intersect with Melbourne's peri-urban areas where population growth and urban sprawl has impacted on the waterways they rely on for habitat. Prolonged drought in rural areas has also had an impact on their numbers.

In 2019 the Government announced a ban on opera house yabby nets and other closed freshwater crayfish traps to prevent accidental platypus drownings.

To further support and protect the state's unique biodiversity more than \$580,000 in grants will be shared between 13 projects for our icon species including the Spotted Tree Frog, the Southern Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby, and the Orange-bellied Parrot.

The *Victorian Budget 2020-21* includes more than \$200 million in funding for biodiversity response.

The platypus is listed as endangered in South Australia and has been nominated for listing in NSW and nationally. Victoria's Little Eagle population has also been listed as vulnerable.

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

"The platypus is one of our most loved species, known the world over as a symbol of Australia's unique wildlife – that's why we need to act quickly to address increasing pressure on its habitat and ensure the best outcome for this wonderful creature."

"This initial funding will support the urgent work that needs to be done now to restore platypus habitats while we work on a long-term plan to ensure this much-loved species has a bright future."