

# Media Release

**The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**

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



Wednesday, 21 April 2021

## ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT RELEASE TO BOOST POPULATION

Orange-bellied Parrots are being released into the wild today as part of a ground-breaking trial to help boost the endangered species population, thanks to funding from the Andrews Labor Government, the Commonwealth and Moonlit Sanctuary.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio said up to 36 captive-bred Orange-bellied Parrots are being released at three Victorian sites in a bid to attract migrating birds and give them a better chance of survival.

Birds will be released at the Spit Nature Conservation Reserve near Werribee's Western Treatment Plant, on the Bellarine Peninsula and on the northern shore of Western Port Bay. This builds on the first four years of the trial which has seen 80 captive-bred birds released.

Each year released birds join up with migrating wild birds. Approximately 180 Orange-bellied Parrots are expected to head north this autumn from the Tasmanian breeding grounds to the mainland – an increase of more than 50 per cent on the previous year.

Wildlife conservation organisation Moonlit Sanctuary, who will release the birds today, not only breed the birds but also lead an innovative pre-release training program to improve success rates. Tiny radio-tracking tags on the birds helps researchers monitor their progress.

The *Orange-bellied Parrot Mainland Release Trial* has contributed to the broader recovery efforts since 2017, when the number of Orange-bellied Parrots left in the wild was less than 50.

It is supported by \$255,000 through the Victorian Government's Biodiversity On-Ground Action Icon Species Grants program, \$200,000 from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, \$115,000 from Zoos Victoria and \$60,000 from Moonlit Sanctuary.

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

*"The Orange-bellied Parrot is one of the world's rarest birds and innovative projects like this are vitally important to ensure its survival."*

*"In the last four years this species has gone from being at imminent risk of extinction in the wild, to numbers in the wild being at a ten-year high – and it's wonderful to be part of the recovery program during this exciting time."*

### **Quote attributable to Zoos Victoria Senior Research Manager Michael Magrath:**

*"To help keep track of the birds, we're attaching tiny radio transmitters that allow us to investigate their movement patterns, social behaviour, and habitat use."*

### **Quote attributable to Moonlit Sanctuary Director Michael Johnson**

*"At Moonlit, our breeding and training program is something we're really proud of, so it's exciting to see releases like this happening to protect the endangered Orange-bellied Parrot in the wild."*