

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



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GROWLING GRASS FROG HOPPY WITH PURPOSE-BUILT HABITATS

The endangered Growling Grass Frog is making a comeback in the first purpose-built wetland constructed thanks to an Andrews Labor Government nature conservation program for urban growth areas.

Fifteen young 'Growlers' have been found in the \$1.3 million wetland constructed by Woodlea at their Aintree Estate near Rockbank in Melbourne's west – the first wetland habitat constructed for the frogs under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment program.

The program demonstrates that high quality habitat can be created to provide a sanctuary next door to some of our newest suburbs. Another 80 habitat wetlands will be protected or created in Growling Grass Frog conservation areas as Melbourne's four growth areas are developed over the next 20 years.

The Growling Grass Frog was declared endangered in Victoria in 2002. It was once widespread and common, but populations have declined since the 1990s due mainly to habitat loss and a deadly fungal disease.

'Growlers' need still or slow-moving pools with warm places to bask and dense mats of submerged vegetation to protect tadpoles. The new purpose-built habitat wetlands – designed to encourage breeding and reduce the impact of disease – will help the frogs thrive.

Design standards also cover adjacent habitat such as grassed areas, which are important for the frogs to forage, shelter and move between wetlands.

The Melbourne Strategic Assessment program ensures development in growth areas follows Victorian and Australian planning and environmental laws and protects biodiversity.

The program – funded through developer levies – is being delivered in collaboration with Melbourne Water, Traditional Owner groups, local councils across Melbourne, landowners and the Urban Development Institute of Australia.

Citizen scientists can get involved by recording frog calls at rivers, creeks or wetlands via Melbourne Water's frog census app: melbournewater.com.au/water-data-and-education/get-involved/be-citizen-scientist/frog-census

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

"This is a project that not only helps to save the endangered Growling Grass Frog, but also encourages Victorians to connect with nature in their own neighbourhoods."

"Melbourne's outer suburbs are expanding, and we want to make sure sites for the protection of threatened or endangered flora and fauna are created and maintained for generations to come."

Quote attributable to Woodlea Project Director Matthew Dean

"Being home to the first purpose-built wetland habitat in Melbourne is something the community can be proud of, as we do our part in protecting this endangered species."