

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



Thursday, 17 February 2022

WORK BEGINS ON WILDLIFE WARD AT WERRIBEE OPEN RANGE ZOO

Construction has begun on a world-class veterinary facility at Werribee Open Range Zoo to treat sick and injured koalas and other precious wildlife from across western Victoria.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio today announced the start of the project, which will see the Zoo expand its capacity to care for wild koalas, native birds, reptiles and mammals in Victoria's western regions.

The \$2.55 million facility will be known as the 'RSPCA Koala Ward' – recognising a funding partnership between Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria.

The RSPCA support and Zoos Victoria philanthropic funds for the hospital are in addition to \$84 million in funding from the Andrews Labor Government to transform the Werribee Zoo into a world-class conservation and education destination.

The Government also provided \$20 million in last year's Victorian Budget to ensure children under 16 can continue to enjoy free trips to the zoo on weekends, public holidays and school holidays.

The koala ward – which will include two fully equipped surgery rooms and a neonatal room – will provide wildlife experts with greater resources to respond during future extreme weather emergency events.

Twelve outdoor recovery zones will be built next to the hospital to house injured koalas and other wildlife during their rehabilitation and a large browse plantation at the zoo will provide a critical food source.

Visitors to the zoo will have the opportunity to explore the veterinary facilities during small-group tours and watch wildlife experts undertaking important conservation work. The RSPCA Koala Ward is scheduled for completion in mid-2022.

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

"The Werribee Open Range Zoo transformation will significantly change the way wildlife is cared for in Victoria's western regions, as well as allowing visitors to see this care firsthand."

Quote attributable to Member for Werribee Tim Pallas

"Werribee Zoo offers an amazing experience for tourists and locals alike. This new koala ward will help look after sick and injured koalas and other animals and offer visitors a new experience."

Quote attributable to Zoos Victoria CEO Dr Jenny Gray

"This world-class wildlife veterinary facility at Werribee Open Range Zoo will allow us to increase our expert care for sick, injured and climate-affected wildlife."

Quote attributable to RSPCA Victoria CEO Dr Liz Walker

"Made possible by those who generously donated to our bushfire appeal, the RSPCA Koala Ward will notably increase our state's ability to care for vulnerable wildlife in emergency events."

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