

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



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BRIGHT FUTURE FOR RARE VICTORIAN BUTTERFLY

The future of a critically endangered Victorian species of butterfly is looking brighter, and the Andrews Labor Government is encouraging all Victorians to play a role in protecting our precious biodiversity.

A study has found there could be more Golden-rayed Blue Butterflies, a rare butterfly only native to Victoria, in the wild than previously thought.

Surveying the Wimmera region, Zoos Victoria and insect scientist Fabian Douglas have found that the Golden-rayed Blue Butterfly is more resilient than previously thought, with more existing than believed over an area of more than double the previously known range.

Adult butterflies were always seen close to the Creeping Boobialla - a flowering low-growing shrub which spreads over the ground, climbs tree trunks and drapes over other shrubs. The survey supports findings that the butterfly is dependent on the plant, where it lays its eggs to hatch caterpillars.

The Labor Government is appealing to residents of the Wimmera region to plant Creeping Boobialla to boost the Golden-rayed Blue Butterfly's chances of survival in the wild.

All Victorians should plant species native to their local region to allow native butterfly and invertebrate species to thrive.

First described in 2004 by survey author Fabian Douglas and Dr Michael Braby, the Golden-rayed Blue Butterfly was believed to be on the brink of extinction due to historical loss of habitat around the salt-lakes where it occurs and ongoing degradation of these remaining areas through weed invasion, drought, and rabbit grazing.

Working with partners including Trust for Nature, the Dalki Garringa Native Nursery and local landholders, Zoos Victoria plans to support a range of actions aimed at gaining a better understanding of the species and reducing its risk of extinction.

The Government has invested more than \$305 million in Zoos Victoria since 2014. Over the same period, the Government has invested more than \$560 million into protecting biodiversity – more than any other in Victorian history.

Find out more about *Biodiversity 2037*, the Government's plan to protect Victoria's plants and animals: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio

"This finding is a ray of hope for the beautiful Golden-rayed Blue Butterfly. I encourage all Victorians to join us in caring for our precious wildlife and plant species native to your local region in your garden."

Quote attributable to Zoos Victoria Senior Research Manager Dr Michael Magrath

"The findings of this survey are very encouraging for this beautiful little butterfly. We are committed to working with our partners on a range of research and conservation initiatives to ensure a long-term future for this species."

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