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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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EASTERN BRISTLEBIRD'S LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

A delicate overnight operation recently saw 17 Eastern Bristlebirds successfully translocated from Booderee National Park and Jervis Bay National Park in south-eastern New South Wales to the most southern tip of Australia's mainland - Wilson's Promontory National Park in Victoria.

The Eastern Bristlebird's population stronghold in New South Wales was used as a launchpad for establishing Victoria's second population at Wilsons Promontory. A multi-agency team of 10 organisations carefully transported 17 Eastern Bristlebirds through the night across the border to a habitat naturally sheltered from the impacts of climate change.

The Commonwealth, Victorian and New South Wales Government's joined forces to conserve the species, listed as endangered nationally, critically endangered in Victoria and under increasing threat, due to increasing frequency and intensity of fire caused by climate change.

An Australian-first interstate translocation for the ground-dwelling bird was undertaken by the partnership between the Victorian Government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Parks Victoria, Parks Australia, the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment, Zoos Victoria and Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary to boost the Eastern Bristlebird's population size, genetic diversity and long-term prospect of survival.

The lone Victorian population of Eastern Bristlebird at Howe Flat, Croajingalong National Park, in far East Gippsland is under imminent threat from climate change, predation and habitat loss. Howe Flat is a fire-prone area devastated in the wake of the 2019-2020 bushfires, where an emergency extraction ahead of the fire-front secured an insurance for Eastern Bristlebird survival in Victoria.

Long-term climate change mitigations for the species, such as translocation, have been a focus for DELWP since at least 2012, endorsed and supported by from Parks Victoria, Australia's best minds in bird conservation, Traditional Owners, rangers, land managers and researchers.

A cross-jurisdictional taskforce spanning three Australian states undertook the highly delicate operation, transporting 17 birds on a 10-hour overnight vehicle convoy, the longest journey recorded for the species, who are characteristically known to be timid, poor fliers and prone to stress.

Landscape-scale, long-term actions implemented at both donor and recipient sites laid the foundation for optimal success, including predator control, vegetation surveys, planned burning and pest management initiatives. These imperative works have ensured a healthy and stable translocated



population, a safe transition and warm welcome for Wilsons Prom's newest residents, the first arrivals since the announcement of the Prom Sanctuary project.

Whilst in transit, all efforts have been made to provide a first-class journey for the VIP travellers, with specially grown Poa grass tussocks from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria sourced to include in the carrier boxes in a bid to reduce any potential trauma for the transported birds.

This project is jointly delivered by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery package for wildlife and their habitat, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) as part of the Victorian Government's Bushfire Biodiversity Recovery program. In-kind support and facilitation made this project possible, through the contributions of the NSW Government's Saving our Species (SoS) program, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and Zoos Victoria.

Quote attributable to Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek

"The State of the Environment report I released this week detailed how important it is to take action to protect our endangered species. We are working across jurisdictions with our Victorian and NSW colleagues to ensure these birds have the best possible chance to establish a new population."

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

"Our 50,000-hectare sanctuary at Wilsons Promontory National Park – where wildlife and habitats are free from pressures of introduced predators and more protected from some of the impacts of climate change – is an ideal new home for the Eastern Bristlebird. We're working across jurisdictions to protect our unique biodiversity and delivering record investment – more than any other Victorian Government in history – to foster our precious native plants and animals."

Quote attributable to NSW Minister for Environment James Griffin

"This project builds on the incredible research and monitoring we have done in NSW for the last 30 years to help protect the Eastern Bristlebird. NSW has had great success in re-establishing two thriving Eastern Bristlebird populations on the NSW south coast, including the one in Jervis Bay National Park. We manage the largest and most genetically diverse bristlebird population in Australia, and this partnership with Victoria means we can share our expertise in a united effort to save this Australian species.

Quote attributable to project lead, Beau Fahnle, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

"Translocation of any native species is a precarious operation and is only considered as a last resort. For the Eastern Bristlebird, translocation is necessary despite the risks. Through this operation, it is hoped that the Eastern Bristlebird can flourish in a location where such challenges are less prominent."

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