

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action

Minister for Solar Homes



Friday, 26 August 2022

PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS PLATYPUS

The Andrews Labor Government is taking urgent action to protect the platypus, funding research to better understand the much-loved but mysterious native species.

Minister for Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio today announced that the nation's biggest platypus survey, supported by the Labor Government, has found the vulnerable monotreme in new waterways.

The Government invested \$300,000 to support the Odonata Foundation and 500 local citizen scientists to collect water samples across the state to test and see if platypus were present.

Traditional Owners, school and community groups, scientists and other Victorians sampled a total of 1,800 sites, finding that platypus are present in places where they have not been sighted for a long time - including the Eumeralla River at Macarthur - but also that they are absent in some areas we expected them to be.

The Labor Government is investing a further \$100,000 to support scientists to better protect the platypus in the wild – with the Icon Species grant supporting the Arthur Rylah Institute to create a heat map of areas where platypus face the greatest potential threats so managers can target interventions at the highest priority locations.

The *Protecting Our Precious Platys* project will determine how threats like climate change, water availability and quality, riverbank condition and foxes and other predators can affect platypus populations.

Previously collected monitoring data will also help researchers understand habitat suitability and identify priority locations for habitat restoration, predator control, and translocation opportunities for platypus.

The Labor Government has invested nearly \$3.8 million to support 22 icon species over the last five years – and has seen successful results for species like the Australian Fairy Tern, Baw Baw Frog and Brush-tailed Wallaby and contributed to the targets of Biodiversity 2037, the landmark strategy to halt the decline of Victoria's plants and animals.

The Government is taking urgent steps to protect the platypus, officially a threatened species and listed as vulnerable in Victoria in 2021, with \$300,000 of funding for restoration works at key habitat and the creation of a long-term action plan.

Since 2014, the Government has invested more than \$560 million towards protecting biodiversity and the natural environment – more than any other in Victorian history.

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

"Thanks to the many hundreds of Victorians who took part in the nation's biggest platypus survey. You're an important part of our work to study the mysterious monotreme and safeguard its future."

"All Victoria's native wildlife is precious - our record investment in protecting the state's unique biodiversity is supporting critical research and habitat protection so they can thrive, not just survive."

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