

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action

Minister for Solar Homes



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UNCOVERING THE SECRET LIFE OF ST KILDA'S LITTLE PENGUINS

Volunteers will soon uncover the secrets of the much-loved Little Penguin colony at St Kilda pier thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Earthcare has received a \$41,790 grant as part of the Labor Government's Port Phillip Bay Fund, to develop better and more reliable long-term monitoring program, delivering more information about the Little Penguin colony including its population size.

The little penguin population are one of the most famous species in the Port Phillip Bay and has become one of Melbourne's most popular tourist hotspots, drawing crowds of up to 3,000 people a night.

St Kilda beach is home to a stable colony of around 1,400 little penguins and better understanding of their movements and numbers will ensure we can quickly develop targeted support for the penguins when required.

Earthcare volunteers have been monitoring the Little Penguins of St Kilda since 1987 and the information they gather helps to protect the colony.

The Port Phillip Bay Fund is delivering grants worth over \$1.7 million to support 25 projects to improve Port Phillip Bay's health, habitats and wildlife including sharks, rays, penguins, oysters and native Rakali water-rats.

Port Phillip Bay is one of Melbourne's most important ecosystems with 10,000 marine plant and animal species making it their home.

Port Phillip Eco Centre recently received \$7,000 as part of the Labor Governments Coastcare grants to install a plant guard trial that will help native flora along the bay thrive.

This involves construction of 12 plant guards that will allow the plants to grow and establish secure roots without interruption from the local wildlife. Once established these plants will provide important habitat and nesting material for the penguins and other native wildlife.

Protecting Port Phillip Bay is vital for maintaining valuable habitat as well as supporting the Bay's thriving tourism industry.

Since 2014, the Labor Government has invested over \$560 million towards stopping the decline of native plants and animals and improve the state's natural environment.

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

"Earthcare volunteers have been monitoring and caring for this wonderful penguin colony for many years and this grant will help to uncover even more secrets about these fascinating birds."

"These grants support important work to protect Port Phillip Bay's health, habitats and wildlife by a wide range of researchers, volunteers and agencies."

Quote attributable to Member for Southern Metropolitan Region Nina Taylor

"Locals and visitors love St Kilda's Little Penguin colony and learning more about them will help us better protect them and the surrounding natural environment into the future."

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