

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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RAPTOR REHAB CENTRE UNDERWAY AT HEALESVILLE SANCTUARY

A flight centre is being built at Healesville Sanctuary will give injured native birds a second chance of survival in the wild, thanks to funding by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio today announced construction has begun to create an aviary and flyway at Healesville Sanctuary.

The Labor Government is contributing \$1.8million to the Raptor Rehabilitation Centre, which will stand six metres tall and form a continuous flight path about 100 metres long.

The wooden and steel structure will assist in the recovery of a variety of raptorial birds, including Wedge-tailed Eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls. The Raptor Rehabilitation Centre will provide a safe, peaceful environment for birds to build up their flight fitness, so that they not only survive, but thrive once returned to their wild home.

Flight fitness is an essential part of the rehabilitation process for raptors, as they need to be able to catch their prey mid-air and swoop down onto the ground.

Sixty-three raptors received treatment at Healesville Sanctuary's Australian Wildlife Health Centre (AWHC) during the past financial year, using a temporary flight tunnel to help with rehabilitation. Road trauma related injuries are the most common presentation.

The Raptor Rehabilitation Centre is being built near the AWHC with veterinarians overseeing flight fitness. Once completed in 2023, Healesville Sanctuary visitors will be able to view the centre from a newly built boardwalk, while small private groups will have an opportunity to tour when not in use for wildlife.

The remaining funds to create the \$3.72million Centre have been provided by generous philanthropic donations. The Labor Government has invested more than \$305 million in Zoos Victoria since 2014.

Over the same period, the Government has invested more than \$560 million in protecting biodiversity – more than any other in Victorian history – working to halt the decline of Victoria's plants and animals through the landmark plan *Biodiversity 2037*.

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

"This unique centre will help many precious injured native birds who may not otherwise survive."

"The dedicated team at Healesville Sanctuary's Australian Wildlife Health Centre do a phenomenal job rehabilitating wildlife and this centre will aid them further in their efforts."

Quote attributable to Healesville Sanctuary Director Ross Williamson

"To be able to return wildlife to its home is something special and the Raptor Rehabilitation Centre will allow the team at Healesville Sanctuary to better provide a second chance for injured raptors so they can soar once more."