

# Media Release

**The Hon Harriet Shing MP**

Minister for Water

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy

Minister for Equality



Tuesday, 23 May 2023

## **SOUTH EAST WATER DISCOVERY LAB HELPS PROTECT WATERWAYS**

Students, volunteers and the community can now help protect the environment through hands-on opportunities to monitor the health of waterways and their wildlife at the Mornington Peninsula's Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park.

Minister for Water, Harriet Shing officially opened the South East Water Discovery Lab at the sanctuary located in Pearcedale. The new education centre was made possible through the support of South East Water's annual Community Grants program, which has so far granted \$230,000 to 50 community groups across Melbourne's south-east.

The South East Water Discovery Lab provides ongoing water quality testing to preserve the health of Langwarrin Creek, which flows directly through Moonlit Sanctuary before flowing into Western Port Bay.

Participants will have hands-on opportunities to test the water quality of the creek by surveying water bugs (invertebrates). Water bugs are nature's biological indicators, helping to identify pollution in our waterways and support native animals including fish, frogs, rakalis (water rat) and even platypus.

The South East Water Discovery Lab offers a closer look at wildlife living in and around Langwarrin Creek, including new exhibits such as the Growling Grass Frog.

The project began with a South East Water community grant to the RARES Foundation (Recovery and Restoration of Endangered Species), with an additional \$35,000 in funding from Moonlit Sanctuary to help make it a reality.

The South East Water Community Grants program supports projects that make our communities better places to live, in areas of environment; health and liveability; water education; and affordability.

This includes projects that support the health and liveability of Port Phillip Bay and Western Port – and areas nearby such as beaches, creeks and wetlands.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing**

*"The South East Water Discovery Lab is a fun and accessible way for students to get curious about the health of our waterways, and to identify ways to protect wildlife and biodiversity."*

*"During Education Week, we celebrate opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom and make a lasting a positive difference to the world around them."*

### **Quotes attributable to Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale**

*"The South East Water Discovery Lab is an exciting addition to Moonlit Sanctuary in Pearcedale, expanding their conservation efforts to help protect wildlife in and around Langwarrin Creek and its flow into Western Port Bay."*