

# Media Release

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Thursday, 12 December 2024

## TINY GPS BACKPACKS BRING BUSH STONE-CURLEW BACK TO PHILIP ISLAND

The Allan Labor Government is using cutting-edge technology and research to bring the bush stone-curlew back to Phillip Island.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos today announced the return of the critically endangered bush stone-curlew to Phillip Island for the first time since the 1970s, thanks to a landmark GPS tracking program to support their survival in the wild into the future.

Led by Phillip Island Nature Parks in partnership with the Odonata Foundation and the Australian National University, the program is trialling GPS trackers in miniature backpacks fitted to bush stone-curlews reintroduced to the island.

These tiny lightweight GPS backpacks enable researchers to closely monitor the curlews, tracking their habitat use, movement patterns, breeding success and overall resilience.

Due to fox predation, the bush stone-curlew has not been seen on Phillip Island for over 50 years. Today, as few as 50 to 100 of these ground-dwelling birds remain in Victoria.

The trial aims to reintroduce 60 bush stone-curlews to Phillips Island over the next three years.

Over the course of the program, researchers will study how the species adapts and survives on the island with the goal of establishing a self-sustaining population in the area.

This important work builds on previous conservation successes, including recent efforts that brought the Eastern barred bandicoot back from the brink of extinction in the region.

Since 2014, the Labor Government has done more than any previous government in Victoria to stop the decline of native plants and animals – backed a historic \$609 million investment to protect the state's iconic natural environment for generations to come.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos**

*"We're proud to support the return of the bush stone-curlew to Phillip Island – welcoming this iconic species back to its rightful place in the natural environment."*

### **Quotes attributable to Phillip Island Nature Parks CEO Catherine Basterfield**

*"The last call of the bush stone-curlew on Phillip Island was in the 1970's and we are thrilled to reach this historical milestone in reintroducing this beautiful bird to its former home."*

*"This unique, fox-free island is expanding its role as a haven for threatened species, which has been made possible through the support of our island community, our conservation partners and the Victorian Government."*