

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Energy and Resources

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Environment

Minister for State Electricity Commission



Sunday, 9 August 2026

BACKING WILDLIFE VOLUNTEERS TO RESPOND TO BIRD FLU

Labor is providing more support for wildlife volunteers and organisations, following the detection of H5 bird flu in Victoria.

Minister for Environment Jaclyn Symes announced a \$500,000 funding package for the wildlife sector.

It includes \$250,000 for frontline wildlife rescuers and shelters and \$250,000 for Wildlife Victoria.

The funding will help wildlife rescuers and carers buy personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies needed to meet strict biosecurity requirements.

It will also help them continue caring for native wildlife safely.

Wildlife Victoria will use the funding to boost its emergency response service.

It will provide H5 bird flu advice for wildlife rehabilitators, support testing and sampling, and supply PPE.

The package will also help wildlife carers access quarantine facilities and guidance on safe wildlife handling.

If needed, Wildlife Victoria will expand its role supporting Victoria's Emergency Animal Disease Hotline.

Labor has invested more than \$130 million since 2023 to strengthen biosecurity preparedness and emergency animal disease response capability.

This includes mobile response offices and a diagnostic van that can be deployed to potential outbreak areas.

As H5 has spread across Australia, Victoria has deployed ground teams and aerial surveillance, increased field operations and strengthened its response capability.

The risk to the public remains low, however Victorians should avoid contact with sick or dead wild birds.

If you see sick or dead wildlife, don't touch it. Record the location and report it to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 so it can be assessed safely.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Jaclyn Symes

"Our wildlife volunteers do an incredible job, and we're making sure they have the equipment and support they need to keep caring for Victoria's native wildlife."

"We've ramped up surveillance across Victoria and we're backing the volunteers helping us respond."

"Early reporting makes a real difference. If you come across sick or dead wildlife, don't touch it – report it."