

# Media Release

**The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change  
Minister for Suburban Development



Getting Things Done.  
Making Things Fair.

Friday, 2 March, 2018

## WORLD FIRST GUTHEGA SKINK BRED IN CAPTIVITY

Healesville Sanctuary Threatened Species Keepers are celebrating the birth of a Guthega Skink – the first ever born in captivity.

It has taken scientists six years to breed this endangered alpine species, which is being cared for in a special breeding facility at Healesville Sanctuary.

The Skink will take about two years to reach maturity and it will be some time before its sex is known.

Guthega Skinks are only found in rocky alpine tussock grasslands, heathlands and snow-gum woodlands at sites more than 1,600 metres above sea level.

Little is known about this elusive skink but is thought that they live in family groups, hiding in burrows dug under rocks and vegetation where females give birth to live young.

They hibernate through the cold and often snowy winter period, and are thought to live for at least eight years.

Zoos Victoria is working alongside the Arthur Rylah Institute, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and La Trobe University, towards the recovery of the Guthega Skink.

The Andrews Labor Government is providing funding to help save some of Victoria's most endangered species.

The \$1.5 million *Fighting Extinction Fund* helps Zoos Victoria step up their interventions in endangered species such as the Baw Baw Frog, Alpine and She-Oak Skinks, the Grassland Earless Dragon and Spotted Tree Frog.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

*"The birth of a Guthega Skink at Healesville Sanctuary is a world first and we're proud to partner with Zoos Victoria for what is a major milestone for the recovery program."*

*"Our investment has been vital for the lesser known Victorian species like the Guthega Skink and it's exciting to see tangible success for the recovery of threatened species."*

### Quotes attributable to Healesville Sanctuary Director Ross Williamson

*"We have gained valuable knowledge of and expertise in the skinks' husbandry needs in case wild populations living in their limited, isolated alpine habitat are impacted by catastrophic events such as a major bushfire."*

*"Breeding them in captivity is the last significant hurdle after mastering basic keeping and hibernation. Guthega Skinks give birth to live young, rather than laying eggs, and it's too early to determine the baby's sex."*