

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 23 January 2020

IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOR VICTORIA'S WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY

The Andrews Labor Government is taking immediate action to support Victoria's bushfire impacted wildlife and biodiversity with a \$17.5 million initial rescue package to assist in recovery efforts.

The recent bushfires have had an unprecedented impact on Victoria's flora and fauna. The funding announced today will support a range of urgent actions necessary to give our treasured plants and animals the best chance of survival – including critical habitat restoration, predator and pest control, and immediate salvage operations.

It will be targeted to those species most at risk, including the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby – Victoria's most endangered mammal – Long-footed Potaroo and Large Brown Tree Frog.

It's estimated 185 of Victoria's species, many of them rare and threatened, have already been impacted by the fire emergency.

These include 19 mammal species, 13 frog species, 10 reptile species, 9 bird species, 29 aquatic species and 38 plant species including the Bottlebrush, Snowy River Westringia and the Gippsland Banksia.

Wildlife Triage Units and Wildlife Assessment Teams are in operation in and around the fire grounds and targeted supplementary feeding is being delivered to wildlife via food drops from the air and on the ground.

The funding announced today is in addition to grants of up to \$1,000 that have been made available to shelters and foster carers helping to care and rehabilitate native wildlife impacted by the fires.

The Government's initial rescue package has been informed by expert advice on biodiversity response and recovery – a preliminary report is available at wildlife.vic.gov.au.

Anyone wanting to support Victorian wildlife impacted by fire is encouraged to donate to the Zoos Victoria Bushfire Emergency Wildlife Fund at donate.zoo.org.au/donation.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"These fires have had a devastating effect on Victoria – its people and its environment. We're providing this direct and immediate support to help our wildlife and landscape recover, just as we're supporting bushfire-affected communities recover and rebuild."

"There are already specialist teams on the ground providing food, shelter and care for injured animals – this funding will expand this vital work, helping our most precious plants and animals recover from these devastating fires."

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio

"This is vital funding that will help make a real difference right now – but we can't do it alone. We need support from the Federal Government to start flowing so we can do even more to help our environment recover."