

# Media Release

**The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**

Minister for Energy

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action

Minister for Solar Homes



Saturday, 6 August 2022

## **RARE NATIVE RODENT REDISCOVERED AT WILSONS PROMONTORY**

For the first time in three decades the endangered Broad-toothed Rat has been rediscovered at Wilson Promontory.

Minister for Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio today announced the landmark discovery, which provides renewed hope for the tiny endangered native rodent known for its chubby cheeks.

Historically found throughout south-eastern Australia, populations of Broad-toothed Rats have been declining in Victoria over the past few decades due to predation by cats and foxes and habitat loss from an overabundance of grass-grazing animals, bushfires and climate change.

A team of researchers, led by Zoos Victoria's Native Rodent Biologist Dr Phoebe Burns and Parks Victoria's Restoration Ecologist Brooke Love, identified isolated grassland patches at Wilsons Promontory where Broad-toothed Rats might inhabit.

After conducting a survey of the area and finding the rodent's distinctive bright green scat, the team was able to successfully trap, identify and release one of the rodents - making it the first time it has been seen at Wilsons Promontory in 32 years.

Along with its chubby cheeks, the Broad-toothed Rat is distinguished by its flat face and short tail. It feeds almost exclusively on grasses and sedges in cool, wet habitats.

Rediscovery of the unique little rodent at Wilsons Promontory underscores the importance of the Andrews Labor Government's Prom Sanctuary project, which will see the area become a 50,000-hectare climate change safe haven for Victoria's rich wildlife and habitats.

The sanctuary will be the largest, best protected in the country already serves to protect precious habitat for other tiny, threatened and often overlooked native species such as the Pookila, Swamp Antechinus and White-footed Dunnart.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$560 million into protecting biodiversity – more than any other in Victorian history. It halts the decline of Victoria's plants and animals through its landmark plan Biodiversity 2037.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio**

*"The discovery of the Broad-toothed rat at Wilsons Prom is a testament to our record investment in biodiversity and the work we're doing to create the largest, best protected sanctuary in the country."*

### **Quote attributable to Zoos Victoria Native Rodent Biologist Dr Phoebe Burns**

*"Rediscovering the Broad-toothed Rat at Wilsons Prom is really exciting news for this species. It hopefully means there is extra genetic diversity here that we thought had been lost."*

### **Quote attributable to Parks Victoria Biodiversity Science Manager Dr Mark Antos**

*"This is great news for the Prom Sanctuary project. It provides a further reason to control introduced predators and grazing animals to help protect this unique species and give it the best chance of survival."*

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