

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action

Minister for Solar Homes



Friday, 26 August 2022

KOALA WARD OPENS AT WERRIBEE OPEN RANGE ZOO

A new world-class wildlife hospital at Werribee Open Range Zoo is now fully operational to treat sick and injured wildlife in Victoria's western region as part of the response to the devastating 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires.

Minister for the Environment and Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio today announced the completion of the RSPCA Koala Ward at Werribee Open Range Zoo, which will increase capacity to provide expert, compassionate care for sick and injured koalas, native birds, reptiles and mammals in Victoria's western regions.

The new hospital consists of two large recovery wards, two fully equipped surgery rooms, a neonatal room, food preparation zone, sterilisation room, pharmacy facilities, hay shed, browse fridge, and a quiet room for injured wildlife waiting to be admitted or recovering from surgery.

Twelve outdoor recovery zones can house injured koalas and other wildlife during their rehabilitation. A large browse plantation at Werribee Open Range Zoo will provide a critical food source for wildlife patients.

The RSPCA Koala Ward expands Zoos Victoria's existing wildlife hospital network, including Healesville Sanctuary and Melbourne Zoo, and furthers the state's ability to treat and care for precious wildlife during future disasters and emergency wildlife care requirements.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$62.2m into biodiversity recovery from the Black Summer bushfires, which burnt around 1.5 million hectares across Victoria – impacting threatened species and their unique habitats, including around 78 per cent of the remaining Warm Temperate Rainforest in Victoria.

The RSPCA Koala Ward at Werribee Open Range Zoo is a \$2.55 million project made possible by significant philanthropic support, including \$1.5 million in donations to RSPCA following the Black Summer bushfires.

The Labor Government has invested more than \$305 million in Zoos Victoria since 2014 - and more than \$560 million into protecting biodiversity – more than any other government in Victorian history.

Quote attributable to Minister for the Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're protecting our native wildlife from the threat of bushfire, part of our record investment into Victoria's precious biodiversity."

Quote attributable to Member for Werribee Tim Pallas

"This new ward is a great addition to our wildlife hospital network - a world-class facility in Werribee to care for injured koalas, native birds, reptiles and other creatures in need of specialised."

Quote attributable to Zoos Victoria CEO Dr Jenny Gray

"There is a strong need for emergency wildlife services in the western region with the number of injured native wildlife needing treatment at Werribee Open Range Zoo climbing significantly over the past five years."

Quote attributable to RSPCA Victoria CEO Dr Liz Walker

"With increasing risk to significant numbers of native wildlife, we are delighted in this partnership that champions animal welfare and will benefit wildlife in Victoria's West as well as our wildlife response across the state."

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