

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Thursday, 24 September 2020

RECONNECTING WITH NATURE THROUGH ONLINE FESTIVAL

The Victoria Nature Festival is going online these school holidays to encourage people to continue to reconnect with nature as the pandemic heightens appreciation for open green space and local wildlife.

Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio has announced the annual festival will this year feature a range of safe, free nature based virtual events and activities from Monday September 28 until Sunday 11 October.

The nature festival events include the world-famous Phillip Island Penguin Parade which has recently clocked up 10 million viewers on its live streaming and will be back open to regional Victorians from Monday.

Other events featured include a nature walk with the Eastern Barred Bandicoot, a search for endangered hooded plovers and a tour of the Budj Bim National Park.

The nature themed activities are Victoria wide and include contributions from Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Vic Catchments and Traditional Owners.

The festival launch coincides with the first round of grants under the \$2 million *Volunteering Innovation Fund* to support community led projects that inspire change, attract new volunteers and have a positive impact on the environment.

Up to \$20,000 will be available per project in the first round with applications assessed by a panel. From next year the grants will increase to up to \$50,000 and will be short-listed before being put to a public vote.

The funding is part of the \$105.6 million *Victoria's Great Outdoors Program*, aiming to get people from all walks of life enjoying the outdoors.

For more details on this year's Victoria Nature Festival go to vic.gov.au/ournature or to apply for a Volunteering Innovation Fund grant visit: parks.vic.gov.au/volunteering-innovation-fund

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

"The pandemic has heightened our appreciation of nature and this festival is a chance for young and old to continue to learn more about our environment and the important role we all play in protecting it."

"This year's Nature Festival is perfect if you're looking for something fun and educational to entertain the whole family these school holidays from the safety of your lounge room."

"These grants will support the important work our volunteers do to protect and promote our environment and encourage others to do the same."