

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Save Rockingham's Little Penguins

### Urgent action needed after another decline in Rockingham's little penguins

A new population estimate of little penguins on Penguin Island near Rockingham has shown a continued decline, proving the Cook government's piecemeal conservation measures are not up to scratch.

Dawn Jecks from the grassroots community campaign Save Rockingham's Little Penguins said the latest estimate showed the population had plummeted 95% in less than 20 years.

"With a particularly crucial breeding period for the remaining little penguins on the island currently underway, now is the time to plan and implement concrete actions which protect and support this species," said Ms Jecks.

"This latest population estimate shows that what the Cook government has implemented so far is not doing enough, quickly enough to save this population. We need interventions to be organised and executed now to nurture the next generation of little penguins."

Ms Jecks said the Cook government had boasted about a range of measures they have implemented to help the little penguins, but these were only announced after considerable public pressure across the last three years. These included an extended winter closure period, enforcing island closures on hot days, and the formation of a scientific advisory panel which will report back to government management agency DBCA at the end of 2025.

"Unfortunately, there is no evidence other than another disastrous population estimate that these measures are doing enough to help the little penguins," said Ms Jecks.

"While the Scientific Advisory panel is welcome, our community is concerned that it gives the Cook Government the opportunity to delay further action until their report to DBCA later this year. Things are so dire for this population that we need actions now, not next year – every day we wait is putting the remaining little penguins at a higher risk."

### Notes to Editors

- Urgent action is needed following another decline in Rockingham's little penguin population.
- New population estimates for Penguin Island show a continued and severe drop in numbers.
- Conservation measures taken by the Cook government are considered inadequate by local advocates.
- The population has fallen by 95% in less than 20 years.
- This has never been more urgent due to the current breeding period. We must have concrete actions to protect and support the remaining penguins.
- The current government efforts are neither sufficient nor fast enough to prevent further losses.
- We need organised and immediate interventions to help the next generation of little penguins survive.
- The Cook government's actions, such as longer winter closures, island closures on hot days, and a newly formed scientific advisory panel, were introduced only after significant public pressure.
- The scientific advisory panel is scheduled to report back to the DBCA at the end of 2025.
- There is no evidence yet that these measures are effective, as the population continues to drop.

- Concerns remain that awaiting the panel's report could delay necessary action, increasing the risk to the remaining penguins.
- Our community are insisting on immediate action rather than waiting until next year. These delays are putting the species at even greater risk.

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**ENDS**



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