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# MEDIA RELEASE

## Alliance releases striped legless lizard back into wild



A healthy striped legless lizard is about to be released back into its habitat

The Alliance has begun releasing striped legless lizards back into the wild after protecting them during construction of the Sugarloaf Pipeline.

About 40 lizards found along the pipeline alignment have been cared for over the past four months at the Melbourne Zoo, while construction was underway.

Sugarloaf Pipeline spokesperson Denise Hurley said the Alliance was committed to reinstating the land as near as practicable to the condition it was found before construction began, and this included temporarily relocating some wildlife before returning them to safe and suitable homes in the area they were captured.

Alliance environmental officer Fiona Bowie and other ecologists oversaw the release of the lizards.

Ms Bowie said the lizards were released to the environment in an area near Yea where many of the species were found.

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The Sugarloaf Pipeline project is part of the Victorian Government's plan to save, create and share water in the face of drought and climate change. Melbourne Water, GHD, SKM and John Holland are working as an alliance to deliver this \$750 million project linking the Goulburn River near Yea with the Sugarloaf Reservoir.

The area was identified as a possible striped legless lizard habitat prior to construction and an environmental management plan (EMP) was prepared by the Alliance before any clearing, grading or construction proceeded. Each EMP was carefully assessed and required the approval of federal and state government agencies.

Ms Bowie said that minimising the impact on the environment and local wildlife was a high priority for the Alliance throughout construction.

“Before work on the pipeline was allowed to begin each day and before any clearing took place, a team of wildlife specialists checked to ensure the safety of animals,” Ms Bowie said.

The Alliance has also been working together with The Haven wildlife sanctuary in Yea, where some other animals, including wombats, birds, possums and snakes, were sometimes cared for during construction.

The Alliance has, to date, donated \$10,000 to The Haven and helped build a new wombat enclosure to expand its work protecting and caring for injured and orphaned wildlife in the region.

Ms Bowie said the Alliance would monitor a number of locations where the striped legless lizards are being released for two years after their return to the wild.

More than 60km of the 70km pipeline route has now been reinstated and the Sugarloaf Pipeline project remains on budget and ahead of schedule.

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LATEST MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY – high/low-resolution media images are available for download at:

[http://www.sugarloafpipeline.com.au/content/news\\_and\\_information/media\\_photography.asp](http://www.sugarloafpipeline.com.au/content/news_and_information/media_photography.asp)

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#### **About the Sugarloaf Pipeline Alliance**

The Sugarloaf Pipeline project is part of the Victorian Government’s plan to save, create and share water in the face of drought and climate change. Melbourne Water, GHD, SKM and John Holland are working as an alliance to deliver this \$750 million project, which will link the Goulburn River near Yea with the Sugarloaf Reservoir.