



Eastern barred bandicoot—Trialling the use of guardian dogs to ward off predators (VIC)

Funding

\$120,000

Project

For thousands of years, guardian dogs have been used to protect livestock. This project explores their potential to safeguard our threatened native wildlife.

This funding will support the trial of an Italian sheepdog breed—the maremma—to watch over Australia’s own eastern barred bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii*) in the grasslands of Tiverton Station in western Victoria. It will go toward the training, care and planning for deployment of these large and loyal guardian dogs.

The eastern barred bandicoot is extinct in the wild on the mainland, occurring only in a few sites in Victoria where it has been reintroduced in controlled environments.

The yellow-brown marsupial with pointy ears and a long tail weighs just a kilo or less, growing up to 35 cm long.

The species’ survival depends on the success of captive breeding and reintroduction programmes. Foxes and feral cats remain a major threat, with expensive predator-proof fences and enclosures providing the main line of defence for the bandicoots after release. This trial focuses on returning the endangered eastern barred bandicoot to the wild, with guardian dogs their new ‘bodyguards’ against predators.



Photo credit: Zoos Victoria

Maremmas have already been used successfully to protect Little Penguins in Victoria. If they also work with eastern barred bandicoots, then other native species such as brush-tailed rock-wallabies and southern brown bandicoots may be next in line to benefit.

Partners

Zoos Victoria, Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Team and Mt Rothwell Biodiversity Inc (manager of Tiverton Station).

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