



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Micro-light aviator highlights the plight of Western Port Biosphere Reserve migratory shorebirds

Micro-light aviator, zoologist and artist, Amellia (Milly) Formby, swooped into the Western Port Biosphere Reserve recently to pay homage to the more than 20,000 migratory birds that visit annually as part of their endless transition around the East Asian-Australasian Flyway – a 25,000km round trip bookended by Australia and the Arctic.

Western Port's Ramsar-protected wetlands are an important destination for these migratory birds and are among the core areas of focus and purpose for the Western Port Biosphere Foundation, which sponsored the Tyabb-Latrobe leg of Milly's 180-day, 20,000km round-Australia journey.

Ms Formby told children from Mornington Peninsula primary schools and attending a special presentation and bird-spotting event at Parks Victoria's Coolart Wetlands that the wetlands strung out across the flyway are like a chain with links in it.

"By taking care of our wetlands here at home, we help keep the Flyway chain strong and have an impact on an international scale," she said.

Biosphere Foundation CEO, Mel Barker, said the organisation's support of the 19th leg of Ms Formby's marathon flight was to help raise awareness of the importance of Western Port within the flyway.

"Populations of migratory shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway are in rapid decline and protecting remaining habitat along all stages of their migratory pathway will be crucial for their stabilisation and recovery," she said.

"Red Knots and Great Knots are endangered and have suffered population declines of around 2.25% a year. Bar-tailed Godwits, Eastern Curlews and Curlew Sandpipers are all listed as critically endangered."

