Fact Sheet:
Moolap, Migratory Shorebirds and Nature Laws

About Moolap
A haven for threatened wildlife

The former Moolap Saltworks are an integral part of the East Asian Australasian flyway for treaty-protected migratory shorebirds that fly to Siberia and back each year, including the Critically Endangered Curlew Sandpiper.

The Curlew Sandpiper used to be a regular sight on Geelong’s coastline, but along with a lot of other migratory shorebirds that rely on coastal ecosystems, it is now Critically Endangered and predicted to become extinct if conditions don’t improve quickly. Moolap has provided much-needed habitat and is a key site for these birds.

Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) in Danger

KBAs are sites of international significance for birds and other fauna and flora. In 2017, Bellarine Wetlands KBA was classified as ‘in Danger’ due to the threat of development at Moolap Saltworks.

Great potential for conservation and recreation

If properly managed, we know Moolap Saltworks could support over 5,000 shorebirds each year and contribute significantly to the conservation of migratory shorebirds.

Strong community support for conservation

71% of people surveyed chose “conservation” as their most preferred land use scenario for the Moolap Saltworks.

How current nature laws are failing birds and community

Great community participation, but obligations unfulfilled

Last year, a management plan for Moolap was drafted in what was welcomed as a one-in-100-year opportunity to get the planning right for Geelong’s long-term future. But that draft has stalled at the state government level. Under current national nature laws, good plans are often shelved for years, while decline continues.

Lack of transparency

The community worked hard to ensure the plan incorporated science-based conservation and social goals. They deserve to know whether the final plan provides a clear pathway for conservation of the Moolap site, funding for restoration of the site, and the establishment of an International Bird Sanctuary.

Lack of action

The Victorian State Environment Minister had powers within the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act to put an Interim Conservation Order in place from day one, but chose not to use that power to protect birds from ongoing degradation while the plan delays continue.

You can make a difference!

One of the most powerful ways you can have your say about Moolap is by contacting your local federal Member of Parliament. Right now, in the lead up to the federal election, federal MPs (and candidates) are especially ready to listen to the people who vote for them.

Write a handwritten letter to your local federal MP today telling them why you want Moolap conserved for birds as well as people, and ask them to support strong national nature laws.