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Welcome back, birds

On Wednesday, Gippslanders welcomed back migratory birds to the Gippsland Lakes with a Welcome Back the Birds event at the Silt Jetties in Eagle Point.

Member for Eastern Victoria, Harriet Shing, attended the event with more than 50 students from local schools to see firsthand the wonderful array of birdlife that is drawn to the area from all over the world.

At the event, Ms Shing announced that \$10 million in funding over four years will support work to protect and improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes. The funding was allocated in the 2015-16 Victorian Budget as part of statewide funding to improve the health of waterways and catchments.

"This is a great opportunity to raise awareness of a stunning and important natural resource that plays a central role for migrato-

ry bird life from all over the world," Ms Shing said.

Member for Gippsland East, Tim Bull, said he was surprised Ms Shing chose to re-announce the funding months after it being made public in the May budget.

"It's not new money, but a continuation of a 2010 pre-election commitment by the Coalition," Mr Bull pointed out.

"We are obviously very happy to see the funding has continued, as the Gippsland Lakes are an important part of East Gippsland. But the Victorian Labour Government were dragged kicking and screaming to commit to the \$10 million allocation, so it's interesting for Ms Shing to announce the funding when it's the same money the previous government put in place."

Welcome Back the Birds event pictorial in Monday's *Advertiser*.