

BAIRD GOVERNMENT TO UPGRADE TARONGA ZOO

Saturday 14 March 2015

A re-elected Baird Government will deliver a \$115 million upgrade of Sydney's Taronga Zoo, including new precincts showcasing endangered Australian wildlife, an expanded home for the zoo's gorillas and a new a new Savannah for lions, giraffes, zebras and meerkats.

The announcement was made today by NSW Premier Mike Baird, Environment Minister Rob Stokes and North Shore MP Jillian Skinner.

"Taronga Zoo is on the must-do list for more than one-million visitors to Sydney and we believe this iconic attraction can be improved even further," Mr Baird said.

"Taronga Zoo is renowned around the world for its exhibits that bring people up close to wildlife to explain the importance of conservation and species management.

"If re-elected this major investment will revitalise and enhance the Zoo's exhibits to further improve the experience for visitors."

If re-elected, the Baird Government will invest \$57.4 million as part of a major \$115 million upgrade to the Taronga Zoo Visitor Experience program, including:

- Revitalised Australia section – targeting international visitors with two-world's best precincts showcasing the most iconic and endangered Australian wildlife
- African Savannah – with new lion, giraffe, zebra spaces and meerkat encounters, around an African village setting
- Congo forest for our Taronga's gorillas – providing an expanded home for Taronga's leading gorilla family and critically endangered Bongos in a natural setting
- New Orang-utan exhibit – showcasing these endangered species and their threats
- Elephant trail – to enable public viewing of elephants walking across the zoo
- Wildlife hospital and vet facilities
- Critical service upgrades – including roads and utilities and repairs to the Reptile World exhibit

Mr Stokes said Taronga Zoo is the largest paid tourist attraction in NSW, with more than 1.4 million visitors annually.

"Taronga Zoo plays a critical role in educating the community on environmental and conservation issues," Mr Stokes said.

"The Taronga Conservation Society Australia has advised us that capital investment at the zoo is critical, with many of the exhibits badly in need of an upgrade.

"This major investment in revitalising and enhancing Taronga Zoo will reinforce its role as a major tourism attraction in Sydney."

Funding for the upgrade of Taronga Zoo will be split between the NSW Government's Restart NSW fund and the Taronga Foundation, using retained earnings from the Zoo and contributions from patrons and supporters.

The funding contribution from Restart NSW will only be available if the Baird Government is re-elected, as Labor has already committed to be re-directing Restart NSW funds to other projects if elected.

Mike Baird MP
Premier of NSW
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Western Sydney

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