



2009-2029  
ZOOS VICTORIA  
STRATEGIC PLAN

MAKING THE TRANSFORMATION  
TO A ZOO-BASED CONSERVATION  
ORGANISATION



# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



It is a pleasure to introduce the 20-year Strategic Plan for Zoos Victoria.

This Strategic Plan is about how we work in a physical environment under threat from climate change and increasing global habitat loss. It is also about how we acknowledge and meet the changing expectations of our market place.

In 2012 Zoos Victoria will celebrate 150 years of operation. Much has changed over this time and will continue to change over coming decades.

Zoos have an increasingly important role in assisting animals and habitats under threat to survive. At Zoos Victoria, we are determined to lead the way in this effort. Over 146 years of operation, Zoos Victoria has been able to amass an incredible depth of knowledge and expertise – expertise that will become increasingly relevant to the conservation of wild places and the wildlife that live there.

Over the next 20 years we will continue to see a shift in the public perceptions of zoos and the ethics behind charging people to see 'wild' animals in captivity. More and more, people will expect zoos to be taking a greater responsibility for conservation outcomes.

We have imagined what our challenges are going to be over the next 20 years – in terms of community expectations, animal availability and biodiversity threats and issues. We have extraordinary diverse accountabilities that we, as a Board and organisation, have to meet – legislative, social and ethical, but now also political and ecological.

This Strategic Plan will ensure that the right processes are in place to support us in meeting these responsibilities, and it will enable us to review and evaluate our journey along the way.

This document outlines a 20-year strategy to develop a new direction for Zoos Victoria – one that will see us make conservation part of everything we do, from the animals we care for, to the experiences we offer, and by inspiring and empowering people to join us in helping save wildlife and natural habitats.

It is a plan that will help Zoos Victoria become the world's leading zoo-based conservation organisation, delivering valuable, tangible and measurable conservation outcomes.

This Strategic Plan was developed with enormous commitment from Zoos Victoria staff, the strong leadership of the Executive Team and with a Board who share the passion for being the catalyst for change. This strategy will guide the efforts of all involved.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Fairley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Andrew Fairley**  
Chairman  
Zoos Victoria Board



# AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE CEO



The impacts of climate change, unprecedented population growth and dramatic loss of habitat have signaled the rapid rise of the environment as a priority in global affairs.

Globally, we have been forced to rethink the way we live and how we have impacted so significantly on the natural world. Zoos Victoria sees first hand many of these impacts. Some of the animals in our collection are of species that have been pushed to the brink of extinction because of human activity.

Nationally and globally, species are becoming threatened and habitat is being lost at an alarming and increasingly unpredictable rate. Each year, approximately 13 million hectares of natural habitat is lost worldwide. In Victoria alone, more than 30% of animal species and 44% of plant life are threatened.

As the wild places of the world shrink and more animals and habitats require management, our knowledge of the captive management of small populations is a skill that is becoming increasingly important. More and more we are playing a key role in captive breeding and conservation programs for threatened species – both here and overseas.

Over the last 15 years, our three properties – Healesville Sanctuary, Melbourne Zoo and Werribee Open Range Zoo – have placed a higher priority on conservation outcomes. We haven't been alone in this evolution. Over the same time, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), has encouraged its members to reconsider their purpose and to place conservation as the single most important focus for operations.

At Zoos Victoria we believe we have reached a tipping point and that the organisation is not only ready to embrace a much larger and more active role in conservation, but that we have a social and environmental obligation to do so.

The ever-increasing environmental challenges compel us to further advance our conservation effort. **Now is the time for Zoos Victoria to take a stand, lead by example, and make conservation the foundation of everything we do.**

This is why Zoos Victoria is undergoing a transformation to become a **zoo-based conservation organisation**. We will have an even greater focus on broader conservation outcomes, in particular the long-term security of populations of species and natural habitats. Most importantly, we will specialise in the captive holding and management of threatened species. We will influence behaviour changes within communities and in support of wild populations and habitats.

As an organisation that operates three world-class zoos, we are uniquely placed to create our own specialist niche, one that enables us to inspire the millions of visitors that attend our campuses and the wider community to take conservation action and to work with animals that require assistance to survive.

The move to a zoo-based conservation organisation will change the organisation fundamentally. The high profile of the organisation and the ongoing challenges that arise from the paradox of holding animals in captivity while promoting conservation will require us to re-evaluate all our principles, policies and operations, as well as gain full support and alignment from our stakeholders.

This strategic plan articulates our vision and a robust set of actions to get us there. This transformation won't take place overnight. However, much of the foundation work is already falling into place. Staff are putting up their hands, ready and willing to commit to further evolve and hone our conservation effort. This enormous momentum on the ground and pull from within the organisation gives us confidence that we are following a natural and achievable evolution.

With habitat loss and the number of threatened species accelerating, Zoos Victoria is ready to make a positive difference to a world under growing threat.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Gray'.

**Jenny Gray**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Zoos Victoria



## Our vision

To be the world's leading zoo-based conservation organisation.

## Our mission

To galvanise communities to commit to the conservation of wildlife and wild places by connecting people and wildlife in the following ways:

**Opening the door** by providing exceptional wildlife encounters that reach beyond the boundaries of our campuses;

**Leading the way** by communicating and demonstrating the role of conservation and research in all we do;

**Catalysing action** through inspiring experiences that motivate participation leading to conservation and sustainability outcomes.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our 20-year strategy plots a new direction for Zoos Victoria that will see us transform into a zoo-based conservation organisation.

Zoos Victoria will become an important member of the conservation industry and the full impact of our work will be recognised as an integral part of helping save wildlife and wild places, both in Victoria and in our priority areas of southern Australia, Papua New Guinea, South-east Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The strategy to bring about this transformation is underpinned by five action areas, which have been developed through a process of consultation with Zoos Victoria staff and stakeholders. The five action areas will focus the organisation at the highest level. And even though each of our zoos is at a different stage of evolution, and so will have different levels of growth and activity over the course of the strategy, these five action areas will ensure that collectively, our work is fully aligned with our vision.







One strategic direction - achieved through five action areas:

### 1 Conservation

We will focus and strengthen the conservation efforts of Zoos Victoria to ensure the delivery of tangible conservation outcomes.

Every project, program and operation of Zoos Victoria will be aligned to the delivery of conservation outcomes. As such, we will take the core of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy, 'integrated conservation,' to a new level. Conservation will be the core business of the organisation and we will manifest this on two fronts – **wildlife conservation** and **community conservation** – that work to conserve threatened species, support direct conservation activities and harness public action behind our conservation effort. We will also protect and celebrate the landscapes within our properties that have natural and heritage value, both historic and cultural.

### 2 Animals

We will establish Zoos Victoria as one of the leading organisations for creating net gains in conservation, by ensuring every species in our collection has conservation relevance.

We will strive to be a world leader in animal care and wellbeing, and actively advocate for the conservation of wildlife.

### 3 Visitors

We will provide innovative wildlife-based recreation and learning experiences that inspire and facilitate visitors to take conservation actions that make a measurable and positive difference.

We will involve visitors and the community in the important work of protecting the environment and threatened species – whether it is during a visit to one of our zoos, or through an interaction on our website, or by learning about our accomplishments through the media. We acknowledge that we have a responsibility to engage with communities that experience socio-economic disadvantage, and we will develop meaningful partnerships and programs to foster social inclusion. There is great power in millions of people coming together to learn about wildlife and wild places and to take action to help save threatened species and habitats.

### 4 People

We will support our staff's development to ensure they, and the organisation as a whole, can transform Zoos Victoria into a zoo-based conservation organisation.

Only by investing in and nurturing the very best skills and qualities of our staff and partners will we be able to fully realise this transformation. Our continued engagement and inclusion of our people will result in strong leadership, further clarity of roles and responsibilities, and meaningful performance plans that align with corporate objectives to which staff willingly commit, ensuring a climate of high morale and achievement. We will seek out and engage with partners who share our vision and work collaboratively with them to achieve mutually agreed conservation outcomes. We will protect and celebrate areas of cultural significance, and value and grow our Indigenous relationships.

### 5 Financial Sustainability

We will ensure the long-term financial sustainability of all our operations to be able to maintain and improve the value of assets and make meaningful and measurable investment in conservation.

It is critical that Zoos Victoria continues as a financially healthy and strong organisation. We will actively seek out additional sources of revenue to grow our business. We will do this through increasing visitation, developing new and innovative commercial products, and staying open to expanding our services. We will promote efficiency of operations at all times. We will maintain assets at acceptable levels. The Zoos Victoria financial model will focus on business unit performance and surpluses will be invested to deliver increased conservation gains. The three zoos will serve as 'windows' to the conservation work of the organisation and therefore as a source of revenue to support our conservation actions.



## Our strategy will

- + Be consistent with the requirements of the Zoological Parks and Gardens Act;
- + Focus the passion of our staff, stakeholders and visitors on the long-term future of the wildlife and wild places that we share the world with;
- + Channel the learning and experience of the organisation into addressing contemporary environmental problems;
- + Protect and further develop the revenue streams of our operations; and
- + Enhance the reputation and influence of Zoos Victoria.

Each of these five action areas will support the continued function of existing operations while also laying the groundwork for the transformation of the organisation. They are supported by 34 tasks, all of which are set out in this strategy.

In addition to this overarching strategy document, there will be an annual corporate business plan and an annual budget, which together will provide immediate focus and identify the necessary resources committed to the transformation process for that period. Against this background, the organisation's annual report will report on our progress each year.

Becoming a zoo-based conservation organisation will take time. Over the next five years we will pay attention to emerging strategic issues, consolidate our efforts and review our existing processes to build our capacity to be a leading conservation organisation. We will become an organisation where conservation outcomes are significant and tangible and where visitors can experience amazing and threatened wildlife, find out about programs working to protect wildlife and their habitats, and be inspired to join in those efforts.

A close-up photograph of a green frog with brown mottled patterns on its back and head. The frog is perched on a brown, textured log or branch. The background is a shallow pond with green lily pads and other aquatic plants, creating a natural, wetland environment. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the frog's skin and the surrounding foliage.

TRANSFORMING  
TO A ZOO-BASED  
CONSERVATION  
ORGANISATION





# HOW ZOOS HAVE EVOLVED

Zoos have been in existence for thousands of years and are constantly evolving alongside changes to both public sentiment and their operating environments. In a modern world, a progressive zoo has to constantly evolve – the zoos of 100 years ago would not be tolerated today.

The traditional zoo is primarily concerned with the delivery of animal-based recreation and sees itself as a social service that delivers family-based recreation at a reasonable price as well as educational programs for schools. The animal collection is influenced to a large extent by availability, public appeal and the Director's preference. They are either government supported or very commercially orientated private sector operations. Many traditional zoos are still found in developing nations where there is little pressure from society to do more than entertain and educate the local community.

In the developed world zoos have committed to evolving and have been following the '21st century zoo' model. The core business of a 21st century zoo is to deliver an animal-based, recreation destination with conservation as its main focus. Educational programs, involvement in conservation projects and involvement in research projects support operations. The animal collection reflects both the consideration of the collection to conservation outcomes and the need to create a sustainable collection. Capturing animals from the wild is not a desirable option and only seen as a last resort to conserve a threatened species.

Over the last 15 years, Zoos Victoria has positioned itself within the 21st century zoo model, however, Zoos Victoria is convinced it is the right time to evolve the organisation further – to become a zoo-based conservation organisation.

The impact of climate change, combined with unprecedented human population growth, natural habitat loss and more animals becoming threatened, means that increasingly zoos will be compelled to focus on broader conservation outcomes, in particular the long-term security of populations of species and natural habitats. This is the driving force behind the next evolutionary stage of our organisation – **a zoo-based conservation organisation**.

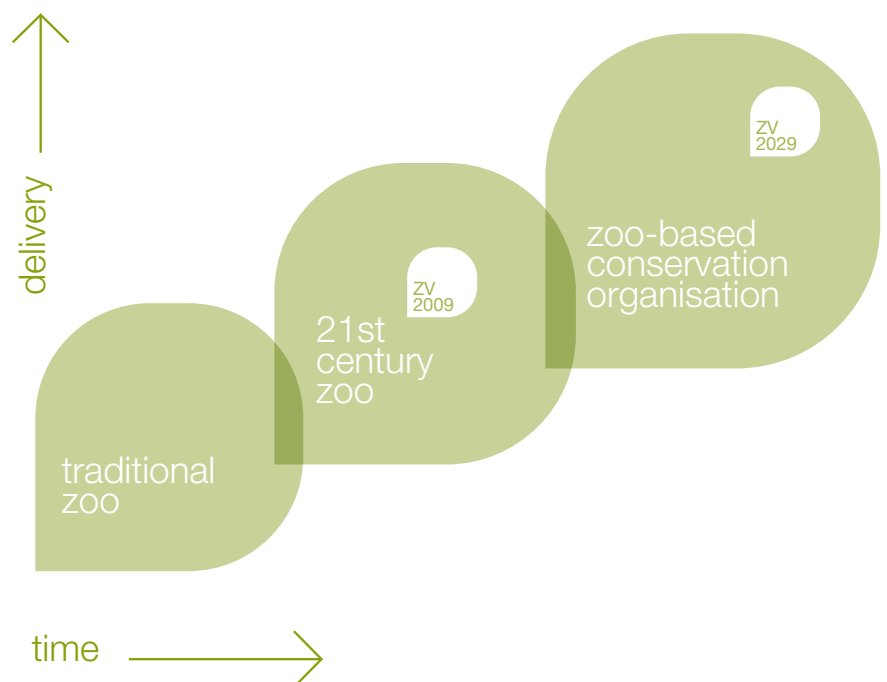


Figure 1 Evolution of zoos

# A NEW DIRECTION FOR ZOOS VICTORIA

As a zoo-based conservation organisation, Zoos Victoria will focus efforts on two fronts – wildlife conservation and community conservation.

We will do this by specialising in the following:

- + working to conserve threatened species;
- + supporting direct conservation activities that have tangible conservation benefits;
- + advocating for wild places and wildlife; and
- + supporting habitat conservation and environmental sustainability by engaging with and influencing the behaviour and actions of our visitors, communities and stakeholders.

Our conservation work is the investment undertaken by the organisation into the future of wildlife and their habitats. The funding of the operations is a major consideration and we acknowledge that we will continue to be funded through charging people to see the animals that our zoos are working with and through government grants. However, the change required in the core business will also open up new opportunities for revenue generation such as consulting fees and partnerships with corporate entities and government agencies and potential acquisitions of other properties.

Such arrangements will create net revenue streams to support important conservation work. In all cases the commercial undertakings will not compromise the conservation ethics and values of the organisation.

## **An animal collection that is underpinned by conservation outcomes**

A major change will be that the animal collection will no longer be viewed as a 'collection' but rather as a group of species that require assistance to survive. To that end, a clear and defensible argument is required for every species held. For each species we must consider whether it is appropriate to hold them in captivity at all, and, if it is appropriate, we will hold them in accordance with the following five categories:

- + **Recovery Species** - if the species is part of a threatened species recovery program.
- + **Ark species** - if there is a real threat of extinction in the wild and the captive population managed through regional and international breeding programs can prevent a species from becoming extinct.
- + **Ambassador species** - if the animals are ambassador species that support important conservation messages and have the capacity to harness visitor and community action behind our conservation effort.
- + **Enabling species** - if species enable visitors to make connections with animals and create emotional bonds that stimulate learning and positive actions. Special care will be taken to ensure these animals are suited to this role and able to adapt to being close to the public.
- + **Research species** - if animals enable the achievement of research outcomes and knowledge acquisition that support our conservation efforts or improvements in the care and wellbeing of wildlife.



The captive care and wellbeing of all animals is paramount and clear programs that support and promote wellbeing are essential. The need to hold animals in captivity must be matched by an uncompromised stance on their wellbeing.

For Zoos Victoria, the full transformation of our collection will be a long-term process. We are committed to a life long duty of care to those animals currently within our care that might not be aligned with our new vision. They will be retained and continue to receive the best care. Should any species be relocated their new homes will meet our standards of care.

### **A financial model focused on investment in conservation**

To support this work our financial model needs to focus all the organisation's financial activities on delivering an actual investment into conservation, which will come from a retained surplus. Each business unit will be 'ring fenced' and the operation classed as either an income centre or an expenditure centre.

There will be specific financial strategies therefore to increase income and reduce expenditure, thus increasing the investment in conservation. Asset maintenance and investment in infrastructure will follow normal business practice.

### **Our people and those we work with will support and align with our vision**

The culture of a zoo-based conservation organisation is significantly different to that of other models. A strong set of values and principles will hold the organisation together and facilitate consistent and robust decision-making.

We will develop our staff to cultivate specialist streams of professional conservationists and staff will be encouraged to be engaged directly in conservation work both on campus and in-situ. Staff will also become more multi-skilled and able to respond to requirements of increased visitor interaction.

We will manage our relationships with our partners, including our volunteers, as well as our supporters and the wider community, more comprehensively and expansively than ever before. In fact, the repositioned operations to a zoo-based conservation organisation will facilitate the healing of rifts between various stakeholders and the alignment of all stakeholders behind our conservation outcomes.

### **Engaging and inspiring visitors to take conservation action**

Today, the power of Zoos Victoria's three properties to directly engage with visitors and facilitate their involvement in actions that assist conservation is underutilised. But being a zoo-based conservation organisation provides a perfect platform to transform visitors into environmental and conservation activists. Their visits will still be a great day out with the family, but visitors will also be provided with active motivation to engage in conservation actions. Learning experiences become more active and interactive, with tactics that engage all ages and visitor profiles. Visitors become friends and partners protecting wildlife. Learning approaches, which will focus on behaviour change strategies to deliver measurable conservation outcomes, will be embedded in all visitor experiences.

The financial model is illustrated as follows:

**Net income centre – net expenditure centre = Investment in conservation**

| Traditional Zoo  | 21st Century Zoo   | Zoo-based Conservation Organisation   |
|--|--|---|
| Seen as a social service, delivering family based recreation at a reasonable price and school based educational programs. Either government supported or very commercially orientated private sector operations. | Delivers an animal-based, recreation destination with conservation as a key focus. Educational programs, involvement in conservation projects and involvement in research projects support operations.   | Has broader focus on conservation outcomes, particularly the long-term security of populations of species and communities in functional ecosystems and natural habitats. Specialises in captive holding of threatened wildlife species and focuses on influencing behaviour changes within communities to support wild populations and habitats.  |
| <b>Operational excellence is determined by:</b>  |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Number of visitors</li> <li>+ Number of charismatic animals</li> <li>+ Financial performance</li> <li>+ Natural displays</li> <li>+ Number of scholars</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Contribution to conservation of threatened species</li> <li>+ Quality of education programs</li> <li>+ Research contribution</li> <li>+ High standards of animal care</li> <li>+ Quality of visitor experience</li> <li>+ Quality of exhibits</li> <li>+ Environmental sustainability of operations</li> <li>+ Influence on decision makers</li> <li>+ Association with like organisations</li> <li>+ Financial sustainability</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Investment in conservation</li> <li>+ Number of wild species supported/recovered to return to wild</li> <li>+ Quality of education programs</li> <li>+ Research that contributes to conservation aims</li> <li>+ High standards of animal care</li> <li>+ High level of integration of collection with conservation aims</li> <li>+ Sustainability of the captive population</li> <li>+ Quality of visitor experience and measurable influence on behaviour</li> <li>+ Appropriate exhibits</li> <li>+ Environmental sustainability of operations</li> <li>+ Influence on decision makers</li> <li>+ Association with like organisations</li> <li>+ Advocacy on behalf of conservation</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Animal collection influenced by:</b>  | <b>Animal collection influenced by:</b>  | <b>Animal collection influenced by clear, defensible argument for every species held in captivity:</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Availability</li> <li>+ Public appeal – number of charismatic species</li> <li>+ Director's preference</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Conservation results in collection linked to conservation outcomes</li> <li>+ Creation of sustainable collections</li> <li>+ Wild capture not desired except threatened species where captive breeding is last resort</li> <li>+ Species often chosen to engage visitors in conservation</li> <li>+ Commercial considerations</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ The species is part of a recovery program</li> <li>+ Real threat of extinction in the wild and the captive population through regional and international breeding programs can preserve a species. (Ark species)</li> <li>+ Animals are ambassador species that can facilitate visitor conservation action (Ambassador species)</li> <li>+ The species enables the achievement of research outcomes and knowledge acquisition that supports conservation and wildlife care efforts (Recovery species)</li> <li>+ Suitability and ability to adapt to close proximity to people and elicit emotional engagement (Enabling species)</li> <li>+ Care and wellbeing paramount and never compromised</li> <li>+ Lifelong duty of care and any species relocated will go to new homes that meet same standard of care</li> </ul> |

| Traditional Zoo  | 21st Century Zoo   | Zoo-based Conservation Organisation  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Financial Model</b>   |  |  |
| Income – expenditure = loss (subsidised by government)   | Net income centre – net expenditure centre = loss (subsidised by government)   | Net income centre – net expenditure centre = investment in conservation  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Income expenditure budgets developed organisation as whole</li> <li>+ Business units compete for scarce resources</li> <li>+ Subsidy fixed so reduction in income must be offset against expenditure reduction</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Conservation business unit established to direct conservation funding projects</li> <li>+ Conservation an expense</li> <li>+ A focus on environmental sustainability encourages zoos to look at their resource use and to become leaders in sustainable operations</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Operations funded through government grants and admissions</li> <li>+ Other income streams created – eg consultation, corporate and government partnerships</li> <li>+ Net revenue streams support conservation work and do not compromise conservation ethic of organisation</li> <li>+ Conservation is an investment</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Conservation</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Conservation is a luxury</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Work within region and internationally to manage endangered threatened species</li> <li>+ Animal encounters create emotional bonds with public</li> <li>+ Participate in recovery programs - funded by self or government</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Conservation is primary aim of organisation</li> <li>+ Conservation is an investment</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Visitor Experience – Fun</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Visitor experience focus on fun delivery of family day out</li> <li>+ Events often unrelated to zoo activities</li> <li>+ Learning focuses on the school curriculum – biology and animals</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Naturalistic enclosures dominate</li> <li>+ Visitor experience often ‘edutainment’</li> <li>+ Accept people visit zoo for family entertainment</li> <li>+ Create awareness of environmental challenges</li> <li>+ Innovative teaching tactics used but still rely on passive learning through signage in zoo</li> <li>+ Focus on awareness with some behaviour change strategies</li> <li>+ Conferences focus on conservation</li> <li>+ Learning is focused on habitats and conservation messages</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Creates opportunities for visitors to be environmental and conservation activists</li> <li>+ Visitors provided with active motivation to engage in conservation actions that are tangible and measurable. Learning experiences active and interactive with tactics that engage all ages and profiles of visitors</li> <li>+ Learning hub to support the natural world</li> <li>+ Links and pathways to other organisations as zoo campuses become shop fronts for our conservation efforts</li> <li>+ Animal interactions create emotional connection that inspires people to learn more and to act in positive ways</li> <li>+ Strong focus on behaviour change strategies to deliver measurable conservation outcomes embedded in all visitor experiences</li> <li>+ Learning focused on active motivation about conservation for all visitors</li> </ul> |
| <b>People</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Tensions exist between management and staff and different parts of organisation</li> <li>+ Often different factions have different/ competing agendas and objectives</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Staff motivation and development is priority</li> <li>+ Motivational paradox in the organisation - focus on conservation, while keeping animals in cages and charging entry fee to see them</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Stakeholder relationships are aligned to conservation outcomes</li> <li>+ Has strong set of values and principles that hold organisation together and facilitate consistent and defensible decision-making</li> <li>+ Staff development cultivates specialist streams of professional conservationists</li> <li>+ Staff are more multi-skilled, able to respond to the changing needs of the organisational environment</li> <li>+ Reliance on volunteers and community engagement strengthens relationship management</li> </ul>   |



## Who we are

Zoos Victoria offers experiences at three great zoos: Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary, and Werribee Open Range Zoo. Zoos Victoria welcomes more than 1.6 million visitors annually across the three properties, making it Victoria's largest paid tourism attraction.

Each of the three zoos offers a unique visitor experience:

- + Healesville Sanctuary offers an amazing opportunity to encounter Australia's unique native wildlife in a bushland habitat;
- + Werribee Open Range Zoo is a taste of the African savannah; and
- + Melbourne Zoo is a window into the biodiversity of the world's wildlife.

Zoos Victoria participates in a suite of national and international conservation programs and wildlife research projects and is one of the State's largest educators, with more than 160,000 students participating in a diverse range of education programs each year.

The Zoological Parks and Gardens Board (known as Zoos Victoria) is the governing body of Victoria's three zoos. The Board is a statutory authority established by the *Zoological Parks & Gardens Act 1995*. The Board is responsible to the Victorian Minister for Environment and Climate Change. The Board's role is to protect and promote the zoos and their roles in conservation, research and education. The Board, and Zoos Victoria operations, are regulated under the Act.

## The Zoological Parks & Gardens Act 1995

The functions of the Board and zoo operations as set out in the Act, are:

- a) to conserve, protect, manage and improve the zoological parks and managed land and the zoological collections
- b) to promote and increase public enjoyment of the zoological collections and the zoological parks and managed land
- c) to increase public knowledge and awareness of the zoological collections and zoological parks through exhibition of the zoological collections, publications, educational programs, advisory services and other activities
- d) to carry out and promote zoological research, the conservation of wildlife and its natural habitats and the maintenance of biodiversity
- e) to advise the Minister on matters relating to the Board's functions or powers or on any other matter referred to it by the Minister
- f) to provide consultancy and advice services to the public on zoological matters
- g) to provide services and facilities for visitors to the zoological parks and managed land
- h) to carry out any other functions conferred on it by this or any other Act.

## Our recent achievements

Through the implementation of our previous strategy, Zoos Victoria achieved important improvements in the following eight main areas of our operations.

### Enriched visitor experience

Visitors now have greater interaction with staff in their zoo experiences. Market research recognises that visitors are very satisfied with a range of features they experience.

### Increased visitor numbers

Visitor numbers rose from 1,381,000 in 2001/02 to 1,659,000 in 2007/08.

### Broadened community support and partnerships

Zoos Victoria engages extensively with students and the broader community in a range of conservation and environmental activities. Friends of the Zoos (FOTZ) and community volunteers contribute guide services and assistance to a range of zoo projects. Our education activities have been revamped with students actively engaged in award winning programs that deliver meaningful and tangible conservation outcomes.

### Introduced new commercial experiences

Zoos Victoria has introduced new experiences at each of our three properties. Overnight camping, special corporate tours, a redeveloped Twilights music series at Melbourne Zoo, an integrated retail strategy, and the Savannah Conference Centre at Werribee have all contributed to renewed commercial success.

### Developed staff skills and improved organisational culture

Staff have developed proven skills in the management of captive animals, conservation of threatened species, zoo design, project management, education, and visitor experience – and many of our staff have contributed this learning and expertise at regional and global forums. We have also identified talented young leaders who are moving into management roles.

### Strengthened financial outcomes

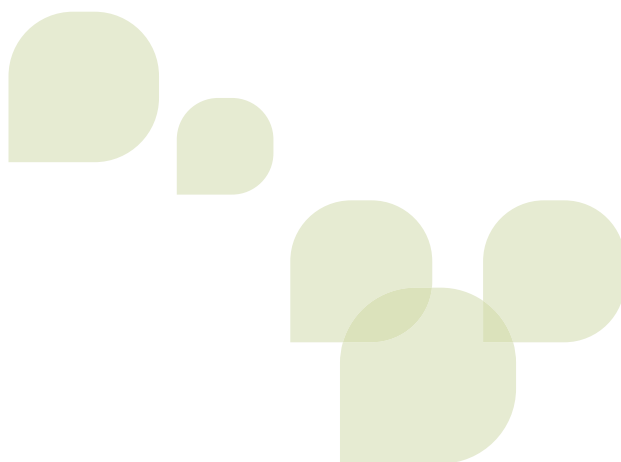
Zoos Victoria's focus in investment and asset management has resulted in the accumulation of a net operating contribution reserve and the ability to allocate a minimum of \$2 million annually in recurrent budgets for asset renewal.

### Put sustainability initiatives in place

There is no doubt that climate change has added urgency to our efforts, not only in our nurturing of the world's precious wildlife, but also in our participation in reducing the impact of human activity on the wider environment. A new water recycling plant has augmented a range of sustainability initiatives. Each of the properties participates in the Whole-of-Government renewable energy purchasing program and has extensive and comprehensive waste and recycling programs.

### Increased focus on conservation outcomes

Zoos Victoria significantly refocused and expanded its level of support for conservation. The number of native threatened species captive breeding and recovery programs has increased. A stronger focus on selected high-value biodiversity conservation projects within our priority international regions has enabled strong partnerships with international conservation organisations to be forged and has greatly enhanced Zoos Victoria's ability to facilitate their success.



# THE CASE FOR TRANSFORMATION

Our previous strategy enabled Zoos Victoria to become an important and exciting 21st century zoo. However, today the organisation is still confronted by a number of challenges. And it is these challenges that now provide a focus for our transformation.

Over 2008-09 Zoos Victoria undertook a series of workshops with staff to identify a shared view of the world in 20 years. The observations included:

- + A sharp decline in available animals with no new wild stock; many large species extinct in wild; and increased pressure to work with threatened species.
- + An increase in community attitudes against keeping animals in cages for human amusement.
- + Greater power of the digital universe, with very different learning styles, where children spend majority of time learning online.
- + Even greater environmental concern to the point where it will become the number one community issue. Increasingly we will start to see the impacts of climate change.
- + The demand for eco-tourism will increase.

It was also clear that, if unchanged, Zoos Victoria will suffer a disconnect between values and operations within the organisation. These observations are all compelling reasons why Zoos Victoria should evolve further to deliver a stronger conservation focus. And while it is important that Zoos Victoria is able to meet changing community expectations, it is also imperative that the organisation realises and capitalises on its expertise to meet the challenges of a global environment under increasing threat.

## A world where habitat loss and endangered species continue to increase

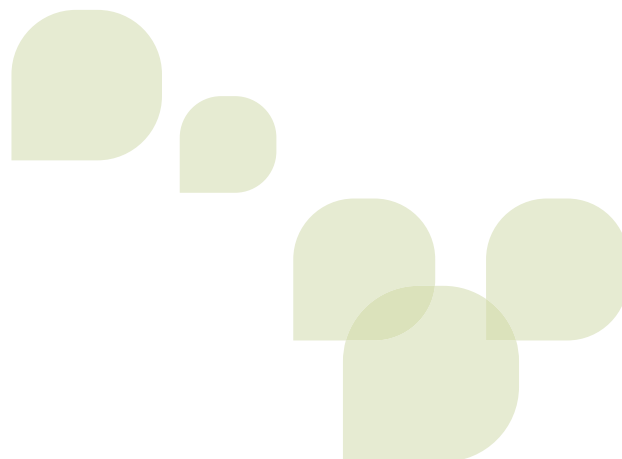
Perhaps the most compelling case for transformation is the dramatic increase worldwide of habitat loss and the number of species becoming threatened with extinction. There is nothing to suggest anything other than a continued increase in the number of species under threat in every country.

### Worldwide

- + Each year, approximately 13 million hectares of natural habitat is lost.
- + In the last 10 years there has been a significant and sustained increase in the numbers of threatened species.
- + In 2008, the number of species in major animal groups that are either Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable are:

| Animal Group | Total number of Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable - 2008 * | % increase from 1996/98 to 2008 – Critically Endangered and Endangered * |
|--------------|--|--|
| Mammals      | 1141   | 53%  |
| Birds        | 1222   | 67%  |
| Reptiles     | 423  | 235%   |
| Amphibians   | 1905   | 4875%  |

\* IUCN 2008 Red List of Threatened Species.





## Australia

- + In the last 200 years:
  - 75% of rainforests and nearly 50% of all forests have been lost
  - 60% of coastal wetlands in southern and eastern Australia have been lost
  - More than 99% of south-eastern Australia's temperate lowland grasslands have been destroyed
- + In 2008, 57 mammal species were listed as threatened, along with 49 birds, 38 reptiles, 48 amphibians, 84 fish and 55 plants.

## Victoria

- + More than 30% of wildlife species are threatened
- + 44% of plants are either extinct or threatened
- + 75% of waterways are degraded and 35% of waterways destroyed
- + About 70% of original bushland has been cleared since European settlement.

## The need to enhance financial sustainability

The injection of capital has allowed the construction of new exhibits, which in turn has led to a periodic increase in visitation. However, Zoos Victoria is constantly faced with financial challenges to its operations.

Our infrastructure is ageing. It requires a \$20 million investment to upgrade and improve facilities. This includes basic amenities that have suffered from a lack of regular maintenance.

Regulations have capped entrance fees and an inability to attract further government grants limits our ability to reinvest in infrastructure maintenance and to support wide-scale conservation initiatives.

The transformation will reprioritise investment need and move the organisation away from a reliance on large-scale exhibit construction.

The clear focus on behaviour change and environmental messages opens new opportunities for funding, such as sponsorship and partnerships.

## Meeting the changing expectation of visitors

The expectation of visitors is changing. Visitors and education groups are now expecting more sophisticated offerings that are more interactive and linked to education and conservation, what is being done, and what they can do.

## Greater competition in the leisure and recreation market

Within the local market Zoos Victoria faces strong competition from other attractions, including the Melbourne Aquarium which has upgraded its facilities, and new attractions like the Eureka Tower. In addition, the harsh economic outlook for the next three years will limit the number of 'going out' occasions, increasing competition for recreational dollars. The unique position of a conservation-based organisation will attract both educational and recreational patronage.

# OUR VISION TO BE THE WORLD'S LEADING ZOO-BASED CONSERVATION ORGANISATION

Our vision builds on the shared belief that our three zoos are not just about the animals they hold, they are also about people and the journey we take them on towards conservation actions. To see conservation as one aspect of our work is no longer enough. It is time to bring the considerable energy and knowledge of Zoos Victoria fully behind making a real and credible difference in conservation.

Zoos Victoria can and will be a true leader: the Australian authority on captive animals; the major facilitator of wildlife knowledge that leads to conservation action; and a high profile model for conservation, environmental sustainability and corporate social involvement.

Each of our three zoos has a unique role to play in the achievement of our vision, but each zoo will have a shared commitment to our five action areas: Conservation; Animals; Visitors; People; and Financial Sustainability.

## Melbourne Zoo

Window to the world of wildlife



Melbourne Zoo is a large urban zoo located on the doorstep of the CBD. As one of the oldest zoos in the world, it is seen as part of Victoria's heritage and fabric, loved and 'owned' by millions of residents who regard Melbourne Zoo as 'their zoo'. In 2012 Melbourne Zoo will celebrate its 150th birthday.

The animals in care at Melbourne Zoo are ambassadors for wildlife and wild places around the world, making Melbourne Zoo a 'window to the world' of wildlife and giving us the ability to raise awareness of conservation issues from across the globe and inspire action.

Melbourne Zoo is already leading the way in this sphere. In 2008 Melbourne Zoo launched *They're Calling on You*, a mobile phone recycling campaign that supports gorilla conservation in central Africa and which facilitates behaviour change in our communities. The campaign has gathered momentum and has since been launched nationally with many other zoos taking it on in their respective States. Campaigns like this will become increasingly typical of Melbourne Zoo.

Melbourne Zoo is also the major focal point for Zoos Victoria's international *in-situ* programs, which involve working collaboratively with local communities to protect biodiversity.

Attracting around one million visitors each year, Melbourne Zoo has the capacity to be the lynch pin of Zoos Victoria's objective to influence behaviour change in support of wild populations and habitats.

As a 146-year-old cultural institution, Melbourne Zoo recognises the need to upgrade and redevelop a number of its ageing precincts. *Wild Sea* headed the list of priorities and will be a benchmark from which to move forward.

*Wild Sea* showcases Victoria's coastal environment and the animals that live there, including Australian Fur-seals, Australian Little Penguins, Fiddler Rays and other fish species, providing visitors with a new insight into this significant but rarely seen habitat. Intrinsic to this exhibit will be an interactive visitor experience that will not only share the wonder and mystery of this unique marine habitat, but will highlight the threats to Victoria's coastal areas and wildlife and what people can do to help protect them.

A priority list of capital projects for Melbourne Zoo has been developed that will focus our effort to not only revitalise and further enrich the visitor experience and animal environment, but strengthen the connection between our visitors, our animals and conservation actions.

By doing this we will grow our capacity to deliver dynamic and creative visitor experiences and conservation actions while being exemplary role models in environmental sustainability.

## Werribee Open Range Zoo

### A full immersion into an African adventure



Werribee Open Range Zoo focuses on African species and promoting African conservation stories in an open-range setting. We highlight conservation issues such as people/animal conflict and engage with visitors on ways to live in harmony with animals. We work closely with local destinations to create a strong tourism precinct around Werribee Open Range Zoo and we will continue to connect with African communities in Melbourne to bring rich and authentic cultural experiences to the zoo.

Werribee Open Range Zoo offers visitors three experiences:

- + African Safari Adventures in African-style landscapes and habitats
- + African and Australian Walking Trails
- + Opportunities to engage with conservation and animal care

Zoos Victoria's sustainable funding model identifies that Werribee Open Range Zoo is in a development phase and requires \$100 million capital investment to facilitate its proposed development.

The development will expand the three experiences and the themed areas and improve the overall zoo experience. This development will also support Melbourne Zoo by holding some of the same species, thus improving sustainability and support infrastructure such as browse plantation and holding facilities.

Throughout the development, visitor numbers, staffing levels and numbers of animals housed will increase and additional land could be required to house and manage more animals in line with our conservation objectives.

Werribee Open Range Zoo is located on Melbourne's western plains, which encompasses some of Victoria's last remaining remnant grasslands. As custodian, we will protect these threatened grasslands and showcase a range of conservation breeding and research projects that will focus on conservation outcomes for Victorian grasslands and the animals that live in them.

## Healesville Sanctuary

### Australian wildlife and culture in a bush sanctuary



Healesville Sanctuary provides an Australian wildlife experience that centres on local conservation and indigenous culture. Woven throughout are authentic indigenous experiences that are linked to the time-honoured spirituality of the land. The Sanctuary is a natural place, offering a place for people and animals to reconnect with nature from creek to canopy. We will constantly look for new ways to explore the stories of Australia and its unique wildlife in these surroundings.

Healesville Sanctuary is the thrust of Zoos Victoria's Australian threatened species recovery efforts, operating a number of native threatened species breeding and reintroduction programs that support regional priorities. The Sanctuary aims to be the national authority on native threatened species breeding and reintroduction programs. The threatened species breeding unit at Healesville will be expanded and its role will become increasingly critical to the delivery of the conservation outcomes of the organisation.

Wherever possible, we will incorporate the threatened species unit into the visitor experience and actively engage visitors to create awareness of the threats to local animal species and the actions that they can take to help these animals in the wild.

Healesville Sanctuary will continue to be the leader in wildlife care and treatment of injured animals and we will champion local conservation and sustainability efforts that involve all of our community.

We recognise the importance of creating new experiences such as *Creatures of the Night* - the ultimate night theatre experience - and the *Icon Trail*, which targets growth in international tourism and the regional economy.

We will take full advantage of our home in the Yarra Valley, a district known for great local food and wine and enjoyable experiences.

The Corranderk is a fundamental and underutilised resource of Healesville Sanctuary. Its role in the visitor experience and presenting the Australian bush and its biodiversity and cultural heritage will be expanded.



# HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR PERFORMANCE & SUCCESS

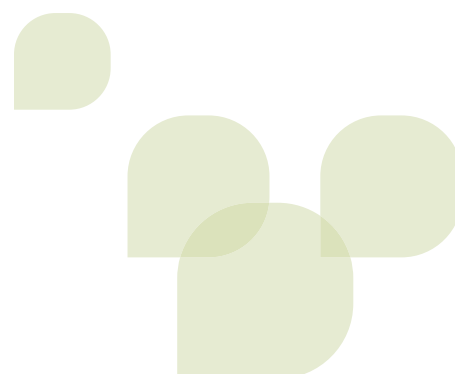
Given that the purpose of a zoo-based conservation organisation is to make a meaningful and tangible impact on saving wildlife and wild places, we must be able to measure outcomes in order to evaluate the success of our actions.

We must establish appropriate monitoring and evaluation processes so that our contributions can be fully documented, clearly seen and properly understood.

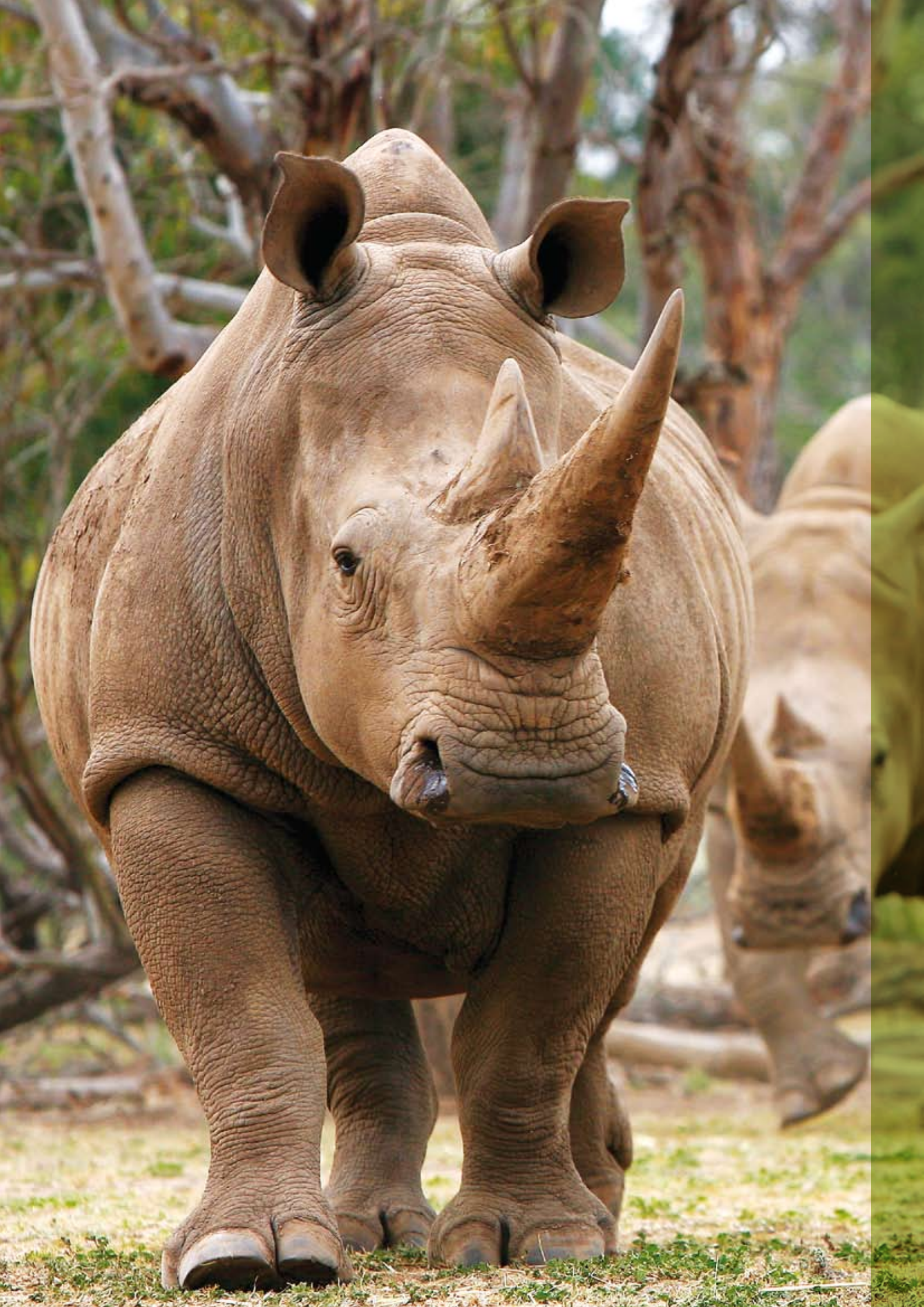
For each of the five action areas, we will set key performance indicators (KPIs) on an annual basis and regularly track our progress through the year against our identified targets and milestones. We will report our achievements in the Zoos Victoria annual report and set our targets for the coming period in the annual business plan.

| Action area         | Key performance indicator  | How we will measure it   |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>Conservation</b> |  |  |
|                     | Investment in wildlife conservation                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ By the direct investment into threatened species programs and <i>in-situ</i> conservation programs.</li> <li>+ By the number of programs leading to successful re-establishment of released species into the wild.</li> <li>+ The monetary value of the investment.</li> <li>+ Measures of the conservation success of the programs will also be developed.</li> </ul>  |
|                     | Research that supports and progresses our conservation aims            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Through the number of research projects undertaken and subsequent publications following, and the adoption of new research findings into operations.</li> <li>+ By research topics being aligned with the conservation objectives of the organisation.</li> <li>+ Studies that increase our understanding of visitor behaviour and our impact on it.</li> </ul>   |
|                     | Advocacy on the part of wildlife conservation and environmental issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ By the presence of Zoos Victoria's voice in conservation issues – through the number of stories in the media and the number of contributions to industry publications and conferences.</li> </ul>   |
|                     | Environmental sustainability of operations                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Through the measurement of levels of use of scarce resources such as water and energy, and our waste minimisation processes.</li> <li>+ Being carbon neutral by 2012.</li> <li>+ Through the implementation of the Environmental Management System.</li> <li>+ Through increased green procurement.</li> <li>+ Through the use of ecologically sustainable development practices in infrastructure upgrades and new capital projects to reduce our environmental footprint and associated impacts.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Animals</b>      |  |  |
|                     | Alignment of the collection with our conservation objectives           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Level of fit/match against our five collection categories: recovery; ark; ambassador; enabling; and research.</li> </ul>  |
|                     | High standards of animal care  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ As assessed by the annual animal health report and the reviews by the Animal Welfare Peer Review Committee.</li> </ul>  |
|                     | Sustainability of the captive population                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Management that ensures we have the necessary number and range of animals to meet our long-term exhibit, conservation and visitor engagement needs.</li> </ul>  |
|                     | Advocacy on the part of animal welfare and wellbeing of wild animals   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ The presence of Zoos Victoria's voice in animal welfare and wellbeing issues – the number of representations we have in the media, with stakeholders and the community, and contributions to industry publications and conferences.</li> </ul>  |


| Action area                     | Key performance indicator                                  | How we will measure it   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Visitors</b>                 |  |  |
|                                 | Community conservation - impact and influence on behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Through layered visitor experience at each campus that address the full Connect – Understand – Act spectrum for various audiences.</li> <li>+ The number of initiatives in place to give visitors the opportunity to take conservation/sustainability action.</li> <li>+ Through the measurement of the uptake and impact of visitor and community based conservation initiatives.</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Quality of visitor experience                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Through annual exit surveys that monitor visitor satisfaction.</li> <li>+ By the total number of visitors each year at our three properties.</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Quality of formal learning programs                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ The number of students accessing learning programs.</li> <li>+ The quality of the programs and the achievement of measurable learning outcomes.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>People</b>                   |  |  |
|                                 | Staff development and morale                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Through our investment in staff development, the rigour and feedback of our performance management systems and opportunities for career planning and progression.</li> <li>+ Through a climate survey that will track changes in staff morale and motivation levels every two years.</li> <li>+ Through decreased turnover and staff absenteeism.</li> </ul>                                  |
|                                 | Partnerships that further conservation work                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ By tracking and measuring the change in alignment of stakeholders and partners with our strategic direction and support of our conservation objectives.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Financial Sustainability</b> |  |  |
|                                 | Financial sustainability                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Meeting budget objectives.</li> <li>+ Through the number of innovative, commercial products and their profitability.</li> <li>+ By embedding continuous Business Process Improvement in every element of our operations.</li> </ul>   |











## THE FIVE ACTION AREAS: HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR TRANSFORMATION TO A ZOO-BASED CONSERVATION ORGANISATION

This section sets out the five action areas in detail, the guiding principles that govern how we operate in that respective area, the five year objectives and the high level tasks that will help us achieve success, driving us to become the world's leading zoo-based conservation organisation.

Each action area has been developed from extensive staff input into what they believe Zoos Victoria should stand for as an organisation and how we need to act to truly achieve our vision.

We will focus and strengthen the conservation efforts of Zoos Victoria to ensure the delivery of tangible conservation outcomes.

### What this means for Zoos Victoria

Our primary goal is to maximise our contribution to biodiversity conservation and we define this as follows: the long-term security of populations of species and communities in functional ecosystems and natural habitats. This is not just about preserving animals, but also about the natural processes that enable them to prosper within their environment.

We will focus on two areas: **wildlife conservation and community conservation**.

**Wildlife conservation** – those activities that have tangible direct benefits to wild populations or habitats outside of Zoos Victoria's animal collections. Our wildlife-based conservation activities will focus on the following priority areas, which reflect WAZA and ARAZPA priorities and the major themes of our three properties:

- + South-eastern Australia;
- + Papua New Guinea;
- + South-east Asia; and
- + Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Community conservation** – those activities that support tangible conservation outcomes and includes environmental sustainability in our operations, interaction with and information to our visitors, the community and stakeholders and our advocacy and behaviour change campaigns.

In Australia, we will focus on providing specific expertise for undertaking captive breeding, contributing to reintroduction programs and associated activities for highly threatened species. We are already leaders in this field, and this will continue to be a key direct conservation focus for us. We will expand our recovery programs in line with State and national priorities, along with the broader biodiversity conservation value of programs.

Outside of Australia, within our priority regions we will expand our roles in international regional biodiversity conservation through the selection and development of key in-situ projects that have:

- + High biodiversity value – that is, they are not just single species conservation but broad habitat protection for communities or ecosystems;
- + Feasibility of success – they are well organised and focused on mitigation of key threatening processes;
- + Integration of social, environmental, biological and economic dimensions in their rationale and design; and
- + Strong alignment with Zoos Victoria - the projects have synergies with our property themes and animal collections; opportunities for visitor engagement and draw on our specific skills and expertise.

We will also conserve and enhance the environments which are in our care at our three properties. Ultimately everything we do will contribute to conservation and be environmentally sustainable.

We will achieve all this by working in partnership with appropriate organisations and working collaboratively with them to achieve mutually agreed conservation outcomes.

### Our guiding principles

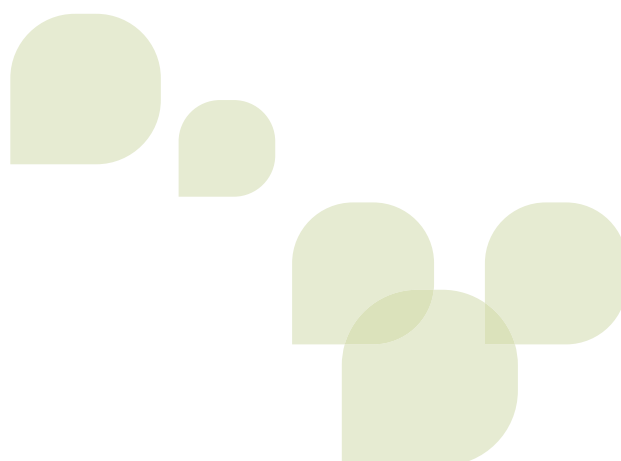
- + We will only hold species that fulfil a conservation purpose.
- + Our direct conservation efforts will focus on local Australian threatened species and environmental issues, and in-situ broad-based biodiversity conservation in our international priority regions.
- + Our conservation-based research will support our conservation objectives.
- + We will undertake the ecological sustainable management of the natural assets on our properties, always respecting and accommodating wherever possible their cultural significance.
- + Our business practices will use environmentally sustainable practices, such as resource efficiency, green purchasing, and environmental management systems to minimise our environmental footprint.
- + We will maximise opportunities to demonstrate and showcase environmental sustainability of our properties and business practices.
- + We will be a responsible advocate for conservation and environmental issues in accordance with Victorian Government policy.

## Our conservation objectives

- 1 To have a robust portfolio of direct conservation programs which satisfy four criteria:
  - + Achieve habitat protection and/or threatened species recovery in the wild;
  - + Reflect our State, national, Australasian and international (South-east Asia, Papua New Guinea and Sub-Saharan Africa) priorities;
  - + Are underpinned by strong science; and
  - + Are both recognised and valued by our stakeholders and partners.
- 2 To run successful call-to-action environmental campaigns and programs that are linked to our priority conservation programs and/or those of partners such as the Victorian Government (our tasks for this objective are outlined under Visitors on page 31).
- 3 To ensure staff and Friends of the Zoos volunteers are knowledgeable, supportive, actively engaged and advocates of our conservation programs.
- 4 To be recognised as a leader in environmental sustainability.
- 5 To position Zoos Victoria as a leading authority and knowledge centre for the conservation of species and habitat in our chosen programs and targeted regions – Australasia, South-east Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

## The tasks we must undertake: 2009 - 2014

| Task   | Responsible                                |
|--|--|
| 1.1 Improve the success of captive breeding / reintroduction programs for threatened native species by 50% by 2014.  | Campus Directors                           |
| 1.2 Further build our international conservation programs and ensure they are delivering tangible broad conservation outcomes in line with Zoos Victoria's new direction. Increase the number of conservation programs by 50% by 2014. | Director Wildlife Conservation             |
| 1.3 Rehabilitate and conserve all native habitat managed by Zoos Victoria.   | Campus Directors                           |
| 1.4 Establish and offer at least five paid experiential development programs in line with our conservation and research programs by 2014.  | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 1.5 Develop stakeholder and media engagement programs that profile and promote Zoos Victoria conservation initiatives and skills.  | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 1.6 Map organisational capacity and identify appropriate partnerships and collaborations to meet our research needs.   | Director Wildlife Conservation             |
| 1.7 Establish each property as a portal on site and online for information on all Zoos Victoria's conservation, research and environmental activities.   | Campus Directors                           |
| 1.8 Implement environmental sustainability plans to position Zoos Victoria as a leader in environmental sustainability and be carbon neutral by 2012.  | Director Wildlife Conservation             |





We will establish Zoos Victoria as one of the leading organisations for creating net gains in conservation by ensuring every species in our collection has conservation relevance.

### What this means for Zoos Victoria

We will be a leader in collection planning for the region, ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of our animals and enabling them to represent the richness, diversity and wonder of the planet's wildlife and their native habitats.

Our focus will be to work with those species that require assistance to survive. We will have a sound and defensible rationale for the animals that we maintain in our properties.

We will only work with animals that can be categorised in the following five ways:

- + **Recovery Species** – those species that are part of a threatened species recovery program.
- + **Ark Species** – those species that are under threat of extinction in the wild and are part of regional and international captive breeding programs that are designed to ensure the species' survival in captivity.
- + **Ambassador Species** – those species that support conservation messages, and have the capacity to harness visitor and community action behind conservation efforts.
- + **Enabling Species** – those species that enable visitors to make connections with animals and create emotional bonds that stimulate learning and positive actions that will help save species.
- + **Research Species** – those species that enable research and knowledge acquisition that support our conservation efforts or improvements in the care and wellbeing of wildlife.

### Our guiding principles

- + We will strive to be leaders in world's best practice in the care and wellbeing of animals, ensuring that we have appropriate infrastructure, expertise and capacity to maintain the dignity and wellbeing of all animals in our care.
- + We will only hold species whose populations can be managed on a sustainable basis.
- + We will ensure that our wildlife response and rehabilitation practices for both animals in our care and those brought to us are ethically sound and ecologically responsible.
- + We will accept a life-long duty of care for our animals, both to those that remain in our collection, and to those that find new homes in institutions that meet our high standards of care.
- + We will be leaders in the local, regional and international effort to influence wildlife import and export regulations.
- + Research undertaken in the collection will be done in the interests of animal wellbeing, sustainability and improving duty of care of wildlife.
- + Collection management will be evidence-based and institutional knowledge will be conserved and managed responsibly.
- + We will maximise opportunities for community engagement in conservation through our animals without compromising their wellbeing.

### Our animal objectives

- 1 To have a sustainable, managed collection that supports our conservation framework.
- 2 To deliver world's best practice in animal husbandry.
- 3 To build a strong alignment between the visitor experience and life sciences areas of the organisation so that conservation and visitor experience are inextricably linked to collection planning, the operations and to the skills and expertise of the respective staff.
- 4 To position Zoos Victoria as a respected authority on the welfare and wellbeing of wild animals.

### The tasks we must undertake: 2009 - 2014

| Task  | Responsible                    |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2.1 Review all species in our collection to ensure they meet Zoos Victoria's new conservation and visitor experience objectives.  | Director Wildlife Conservation |
| 2.2 Establish leading animal care knowledge bank within Zoos Victoria so that we are constantly able to evolve our management plans in line with world's best practice.   | Director Wildlife Conservation |
| 2.3 Review current and future needs of the veterinary department to ensure there is no compromise in expertise, capacity or infrastructure to care for animals.   | Campus Directors               |
| 2.4 Map required skills, undertake a skills audit and then implement a development program to ensure staff have enhanced skills in collection management that meets our conservation and visitor experience objectives. | Director Human Resources       |
| 2.5 Establish processes that will position Zoos Victoria to become recognised as a leading authority on the care of wild animals.   | Director Wildlife Conservation |

We will provide innovative wildlife-based recreation and learning experiences that inspire and facilitate visitors to take conservation actions that make a measurable and positive difference.

### What this means for Zoos Victoria

Our visitors are an essential part of why we exist and how we will achieve our vision. We will provide visitors with truly satisfying, memorable experiences. Safe, respectful encounters with animals and high quality services and amenities will encourage our visitors to return again and again and inspire in them a real love of animals and wild places that makes destructive behaviour, on any scale, unacceptable.

Visitor experiences will have increased focus on educating people about the threats to wildlife and habitats and helping them to take actions in their everyday lives to make a difference. We will deliver behaviour change and advocacy campaigns across our three properties and within communities that inspire action and deliver measurable and tangible results in support of wildlife and habitats. We will be able to demonstrate the power of our animals as ambassadors for conservation outcomes in the wild by being the catalyst for action.

We have a commitment to deliver socially inclusive programs that engage communities that experience socio-economic disadvantage, opening the door to cultural and learning experiences to people who haven't had the opportunity to visit us before.

We will embrace new technology to extend our visitor experience and community campaigns beyond the boundaries of our zoos.

We respect the diverse and rich cultures of the people of Melbourne and commit to engaging people in a variety of ways that honours culture and history. Visitor experience will be enriched through cultural and historical overlays.

### Our guiding principles

- + We will ensure the Connect-Understand-Act model underpins all the ways in which we engage our visitors, community and stakeholders.
- + We will ensure a visit to one of our properties is easy, enjoyable, friendly and meaningful.
- + We will employ best practice interpretation, learning and behaviour change approaches.
- + We will apply and showcase best practice environmental sustainability principles in all of our visitor services, activities and products.
- + We will deliver a layered visitor experience for all ages that helps people to take targeted and measurable conservation and sustainability actions at home, by joining with us or joining with others.
- + We will constantly seek the feedback of our visitors and evaluate our visitor experiences to ensure they continue to meet and even exceed visitors' changing needs and expectations.
- + We will respect and consider the cultural diversity of our visitors.

## Our visitor objectives

- 1 To offer superior and inspiring animal based experiences that connect people with wildlife and conservation action and to use the unique habitats and landscapes in our care to inspire environmental action.
- 2 To offer every visitor a layered, meaningful, and fun learning experience using a variety of interpretive approaches to engage all our various audiences.
- 3 To ensure visitors experience memorable moments and have opportunities to actively participate in conservation action.
- 4 To enable our staff and volunteers to actively facilitate the delivery of engaging experiences for visitors.
- 5 To measure and demonstrate our visitors' contribution in delivering conservation and sustainability outcomes.

## The tasks we must undertake: 2009 - 2014

| Task   | Responsible                                |
|--|--|
| 3.1 Review visitor offerings against our Connect-Understand-Act model and implement a five-year improvement program to ensure they all provide dynamic and fun experiences that facilitate our visitors' journey towards conservation action.  | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 3.2 Build our capacity to actively involve visitors in conservation and environmental sustainability action by delivering an annual program of 'Call to Action' campaigns and activities at each campus.   | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 3.3 Build a team of people (staff & volunteers) with the talent, skills, understanding and time to facilitate the visitor experience by implementing a five-year workforce improvement plan including new Visitor Experience focused recruitment criteria and targeted annual training and development programs. | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 3.4 Establish a diverse new range of memorable animal encounters at each campus aligned with our conservation and visitor experience objectives.   | Campus Directors                           |
| 3.5 Improve existing exhibits/infrastructure and build new exhibits/infrastructure to meet visitor needs while also providing world-class animal care.   | Campus Directors                           |
| 3.6 Improve the financial performance of our current visitor programs by 100% by 2014; develop a minimum of three profitable new programs; and deliver the agreed contract outcomes for our funding partners.  | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 3.7 Improve the quality of amenities and services to create a strong foundation for the visitor experience, reflective of our conservation and environmental sustainability principles.  | Campus Directors                           |
| 3.8 Reflect cultural significance and importance in the design and delivery of visitor experiences.  | Director Visitor and Community Development |



We will support our staff's development to ensure they, and the organisation as a whole, can transform Zoos Victoria into a zoo-based conservation organisation.

### What this means for Zoos Victoria

Our people encompass our staff, our volunteers and our stakeholders. Our people share our values, aspire to be true advocates and ambassadors for Zoos Victoria, and help us to achieve our vision. Our relationships with our people are characterised by honesty and integrity. Our people — and our staff in particular — will be the best at what they do, receiving full organisational support and earning the respect of others.

We will foster an organisation that has high staff morale and achievement, along with an embedded commitment to achieve our vision.

We will forge collaborative partnerships with stakeholders that align with our vision to achieve mutually agreed conservation outcomes. We will strengthen our relationship with Friends of the Zoos. We will nurture, grow and celebrate Indigenous heritage and relationships with Indigenous communities. We celebrate our place within the local communities where our three properties exist. We will instil an understanding of our vision with local communities and further grow our partnerships with organisations and individuals that will help us achieve our vision.

### Our guiding principles

- + We will empower operational autonomy and the growth of individual value propositions at each of our three properties, but we will work as one organisation, with one strategic direction.
- + We will respect both the skill and role of fellow staff members and their place in achieving our vision and we will look to their expertise and capacity before seeking outside help.
- + We will strive to operate a safe, positive and enjoyable work environment.
- + We will attract and retain highly motivated staff, volunteers and partners.
- + We will abide by and support organisation decisions.
- + We will maintain regular and open communication with each other and involve our people in planning and decision-making.
- + We will provide time and space for social connection and activity.
- + We respect the views and values of individuals and other organisations, but will only focus our work and build partnerships with those that align with our vision, mission and strategic direction.

## Our people objectives

- 1 To ensure our vision and values are fully embraced and demonstrated by our staff, stakeholders and partners.
- 2 To align our work processes with our vision and mission.
- 3 To enable our staff to demonstrate a high level of capability and wellbeing as a result of the right investment in their professional and personal development.
- 4 For our staff to be recognised as a team of high performers by the industry, the conservation community and broader community.
- 5 To ensure that every staff member has a relevant job description that will communicate exactly what their role is and what they are accountable for.

## The tasks we must undertake: 2009 - 2014

| Task   | Responsible                                |
|--|--|
| 4.1 Entrench the vision and values throughout the organisation and increase staff satisfaction by 30% by 2014.                     | Director Human Resources                   |
| 4.2 Engage our stakeholders to strengthen relationships and partnerships.  | Director Visitor and Community Development |
| 4.3 Align our structure to deliver the strategy and improve operational effectiveness.   | Director Human Resources                   |
| 4.4 Align all HR processes and policies to deliver our strategic direction.  | Director Human Resources                   |
| 4.5 Invest in the professional development of our staff and increase our financial investment in staff development by 40% by 2014. | Director Human Resources                   |
| 4.6 Nurture the wellbeing of our staff.  | Director Human Resources                   |
| 4.7 Develop and implement policies and procedures to entrench high performance in our people.                                      | Director Human Resources                   |

We will ensure the long-term financial sustainability of all our operations to be able to maintain and improve the value of assets and make a meaningful and measurable investment in conservation.

#### What this means for Zoos Victoria

We will be financially sustainable by generating more revenue and managing costs so that our revenue today is greater than tomorrow's expenditure. Our model will classify business units as an income centre or an expense centre and we will focus all the financial activities of the organisation to deliver a retained surplus so that we can deliver an increased investment into conservation.

We will adopt a financial model that enables us to generate higher levels of income and government support. We will submit robust business cases to government for capital funding. We will create commercial growth with integrity and without guilt to support our conservation objectives. To do this means we take a long-term view of both our financial needs and opportunities as well as ensure that our operations are always run as effectively and efficiently as possible.

We will explore innovative ways to generate more income, by entrenching a culture that strives to identify new opportunities to increase visitation and develop new and innovative commercial products. We will also be open to expanding our services through opportunities to that not only provide the potential for increased revenue and investment in conservation, but to extend our work with threatened wildlife and open the door to new ways to inspire conservation action.

By doing this, we will not only ensure our sustainability and secure our assets, but also invest in the conservation of wildlife and wild places.

#### Our guiding principles

- + We will explore new ways to create commercial growth but our efforts and strategies will not compromise animal wellbeing or the intent of our strategic direction.
- + We will build and nurture an understanding of the financial environment with all our people and ensure transparency at all times.
- + Our financial practices and business decisions are informed by robust processes, analysis and clearly articulated plans aligned with our strategic direction.
- + Our projects will allow for appropriate research, ongoing maintenance and contingency costs.
- + Our staff will act responsibly and be accountable in maximising the use of resources, seeking at all times to achieve best value outcomes and meet budget objectives.
- + We will reinvest in our assets.

## Our financial sustainability objectives

- 1 To maximise revenue and control expenditure while driving financial accountability in all areas of our business.
- 2 To ensure the integrity and viability of our assets in the short and long term.
- 3 To have innovative commercial products that are aligned to our core business and that will provide new income streams of substantial recurrent funding.
- 4 To embed a continuous Business Process Improvement (BPI) culture to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in every element of our operations.
- 5 To have a successful Foundation that delivers a significant contribution to the organisation to enable investment in conservation work and capital development.
- 6 To have an extensive and transparent legal compliance and risk management framework.

## The tasks we must undertake: 2009 - 2014

| Task  | Responsible             |
|---|-------------------------|
| 5.1 Develop financial model which maximises revenue and controls expenditure, while driving financial accountability in all areas of our business.  | Chief Financial Officer |
| 5.2 Create a comprehensive asset maintenance and renewal plan that ensures the integrity and viability of our assets in the short and long term.  | Chief Financial Officer |
| 5.3 Review current products and identify and implement additional innovative activities aligned to our core business that will provide new income streams of substantial, recurrent funding. Assess three proposals each year with a minimum of three projects implemented by 2013/14, all providing net income of minimum \$300,000 per annum. | Director Foundation     |
| 5.4 Establish and implement an ongoing Business Process Improvement program – assess and re-engineer every functional interface process in Zoos Victoria by December 2010 and have a complete system of continuous review by 2013/14.   | Director Foundation     |
| 5.5 Develop a plan for the Foundation that delivers annual donations of \$5 million in the year 2013/2014, with a cost to income ratio of 12%, resulting in a net contribution of \$4.4 million.  | Director Foundation     |
| 5.6 Make all staff aware of the legal compliance and risk management framework within which the organisation operates so that they understand their responsibilities.   | Chief Financial Officer |





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