



Zoos SA's
**Strategic
Plan**

2017 - 2022

ZOOS
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



zoos.sa.com.au



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Introduction

Zoos SA is a long established conservation charity that exists to connect people with nature and save species from extinction. Our efforts are dedicated to leading and inspiring conservation action to support global biodiversity.



Our Strategic Plan sets out the direction we are taking over the next five years and guides our actions, priorities and resources to deliver on four goals:

- Connect people with nature
- Save species from extinction
- Work in an ethical and sustainable manner
- Grow a sound and advancing organisation

In recent years we have expanded the scope and scale of the conservation work we do, together with the education programs and visitor experiences we offer. We have also developed plans for the future development of Adelaide and Monarto Zoos. The challenge for us is ensuring the organisation's capacity – skills, technology, infrastructure and partnerships - to support this growth and to be financially sustainable in the long term.

This Strategic Plan outlines specific strategies to deliver our 20-year Master Plan, strengthen our role in conservation, create valuable visitor experiences, and ensure we meet and exceed our welfare, industry and legislative responsibilities.

The outcomes we hope to achieve are identified for each goal. Specific targets so that we can measure and review our progress towards these will ensure the decisions we make and the work we do closely align with the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan reflects the aspirations, views and ideas drawn from a number of significant planning processes – notably our 20-year Master Plan, Conservation Directions and Environmental Management Plan – as well as market research and surveys.

As a conservation charity, our resources are limited but our purpose has never been more important. Much of our success will continue to come from the commitment, skill and passion of our staff and volunteers together with the support of our partners, sponsors and members. Together, we can effectively lead and inspire conservation action.

Our purpose is to

**Connect
people
with
nature and
save species
from
extinction.**

Our aspiration is to

Lead and
inspire
conservation
action to
support global
biodiversity.



Who we are

We are a conservation charity that operates Adelaide and Monarto Zoos under the direction of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia (RZSSA) via its board and members. The RZSSA was established in 1878 to house and show animals, birds and reptiles to the community, but as community expectations have evolved so too has the role of the modern zoo. Today, Adelaide and Monarto Zoos are local and global conservation agencies at a time when the number of species facing extinction is unprecedented. We are an independent organisation and rely heavily on generating our own income streams through corporate sponsorship, government grants, fundraising, memberships and admissions to invest in conservation and the welfare of animals in our care.

Adelaide Zoo is an important part of South Australia's social, heritage and educational history. Since opening to the public in 1883, the zoo remains a popular destination for locals and tourists. The zoo is one of the largest pay-to-enter tourist attractions in South Australia offering a vibrant city oasis, with its 130-year-old botanical garden setting, within walking distance of the Adelaide central business district.

Located 70km east of Adelaide, Monarto Zoo began in 1983 as a special purpose agistment and breeding site and opened to the public in 1993. It is one of the world's largest open range zoos and the most visited pay to enter regional tourism destination for both domestic and international visitors.

Our resources and expertise are dedicated to species and habitat conservation work, including breeding and release, habitat restoration, biological surveys, insurance populations, studies in reproductive biology, wildlife disease management, conservation planning and community development. Much of this work is done with partners – zoo networks, non-government organisations, universities and government agencies. We are also supported by a dedicated group of approximately 500 volunteers.

Our world is experiencing the worst loss of species since the extinction of dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Our purpose of connecting people with nature and saving species from extinction is more relevant and pressing than ever before. Australia alone has 440 species of birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals and 1263 species of plants considered to be threatened at a national level.

A lot of this goes unseen by over half a million people that visit our zoos each year, but this is changing and must change if we are to inspire conservation action. Our strategic plan requires everything we do to have a conservation and sustainability focus - public visits, educational services, behind the scenes experiences and animal encounters. By creating increased awareness of the conservation work we do, we will inspire visitors to think about the action they can take to reduce the threats to animals, plants and habitats and join us in our aspiration to support global biodiversity.



Our track record

We have a track record of innovation and successfully delivering ambitious projects.

Leading practice

We are a fully accredited member of the Zoo and Aquarium Association and demonstrate leading practice in our Charter for Animal Welfare.

We are proud to have played a role in a number of world firsts in conservation breeding, veterinary practices and returning species to the wild. Notably, we pioneered the animal breeding technique of 'cross fostering' to save endangered wallaby species and were the first zoo to successfully breed one of Australia's rarest native reptiles the Pygmy Blue-tongue lizard.

Our zoos are recognised as two of the top tourism destinations in South Australia and have been awarded a number of tourism industry awards including the People's Choice Award for Monarto Zoo at the 2016 Brand South Australia Regional Awards.

Growth in admissions and memberships

Visitor admissions for both Adelaide and Monarto Zoos increased by 24% between 2012 and 2016, with annual memberships having increased by 41% over the same period.

As a result of this growth, we have taken the opportunity to expand our Behind the Scenes and Encounter experiences to include Meerkats, Coati, Chameleon, Little Penguins and Giraffes.

Planning and design

We have undertaken extensive planning over an 18-month period to develop our Zoos SA Master Plan 2015-2035 for the future of Adelaide and Monarto Zoos. The Master Plan is designed to increase our capacity to safeguard species; improve the experiences for visitors; address compliance and risk; and include sustainability principles in the design and construction of all upgrades and new developments.

We delivered the first Master Plan project in 2015, involving the construction of a feature playground designed on nature play principles. The project received the 2016 SA Tourism Landscape Architecture Award by the Australian Institute of Architects.

We have developed planning approaches to prioritise our conservation programs to ensure these align with our goals, use resources to achieve long term benefits and provide a balance of local, national and international projects. We are also better placed to make consistent and informed decisions about the species we hold at our zoos and the role we play in supporting conservation.

24%

Admissions growth

41%

Membership growth



Sustainable practice

We have actioned over 80% of our Environmental Management Plan, reducing our overall carbon footprint by 105 tonnes of CO₂-e between 2013 and 2016, diverting 86% of our waste to landfill (as at 2016) and installing solar infrastructure that is expected to deliver 20% renewable energy and further reduce carbon emissions.

We have also gained certification for Greenhouse Gas Carbon Managed (ISO 14064.1:2006) and Environmental Management Systems (ISO 14001:2015) standards.

Recovery of threatened species

Zoos SA has bred at least fourteen species for reintroduction programs in South Australia, nationally and internationally including Tasmanian Devils, Stick-nest Rats, Bilbies, Western Swamp Tortoises, Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies, Orange-bellied Parrots and the Przewalski's Horse.

We have brought back species from extinction in the wild, including re-establishing a wild population of South Australian Mainland Tammar Wallabies at Innes National Park in the Yorke Peninsula after they were classified as extinct in the 1930s.

We have undertaken land conservation measures to protect threatened flora in Monarto including one of South Australia's rarest plants, the Monarto Mintbush. We are also supporting revegetation in southeast SA as part of the recovery of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos.

We provide specialist expertise and financial support for international conservation projects to protect habitats, support species recovery and work with local communities.

86% of waste diverted from landfill

Community investment

We work with a variety of communities both locally and internationally.

Zoos SA has a 500-strong volunteer group dedicated to animal welfare and conservation with an above national average retention rate of 5 years and a contribution value of over \$2 million a year.

Since 2010 we have supported the Aboriginal Learning on Country Program at Monarto to provide hands on training, mentoring and TAFE accredited studies in land management practice. The program has resulted in conservation activities across Monarto Zoo and Crown Land including revegetation, native seeding and collecting, feral animal control and a native bush food program.

We also provide ranger support in Africa's rangelands in Sera Conservancy, Kenya helping to reduce poaching and protecting a range of species including rhinos.

We support Tetepare, Solomon Islands, where locals are protecting their environment, through our Zoo Learning programs on site and in schools with more than 58,000 students and teachers participating in learning experiences.

We have proudly donated more than \$32,000 each year in free of charge admissions tickets and experiences to a number of community groups.

105 tonnes
CO₂ saved





Our conservation reach

We provide specialist expertise and financial support for international conservation projects covering Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions to protect habitats, support species recovery and work with local communities. We also support research and actions to adopt best practice in animal welfare and to address illegal wildlife trade.

For more information about our projects and partnerships, please visit our website www.zoossa.com.au/conservation-programs

1. Australia

Key native species projects: Orange-bellied Parrot, Mallee Emu-wren, Pygmy Bluetongue, Striped Legless Lizard, Western Swamp Tortoise, Greater Bilby, Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby, Black-flanked Rock-wallaby (Warru), Tasmanian Devil, Mainland Tammar wallaby and South Eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

We actively manage our Monarto site to conserve threatened plant species and provide refuge for declining woodland bird species.

We also work with a range of partners under Rewilding for Conservation to breed and reintroduce animals such as bettongs, bilbies and wallabies into priority conservation areas.



2. SERA Wildlife Conservancy

Kenya - Kenya - support a 330,000ha wildlife conservancy in Northern Kenya owned by a Samburu community of 16,000 tribes people, by selling bead-work made by the Samburu women and sending back all profits to support ranger wages. Reticulated giraffe and Black rhino have both been successfully reintroduced back into the conservancy.

3. China Wildlife Conservation Association

China – coordinate panda international agreements and research activities, including in-situ conservation, ex-situ breeding and release.

4. Wildlife Asia

Indonesia, Java, Sumatra, Malaysia – support projects for habitat protection and rescue efforts for threatened species including Australian Orangutan Project, Free the Bears, Silvery Gibbon Project, Asian Rhino Project and the International Tiger Project.

5. Giraffe Conservation Fund

Throughout Africa – support giraffe conservation and management in the African wild through fund raising, awareness and habitation protection programs.

6. Komodo Survival Program

Indonesia – support the management and conservation of the Komodo Dragon in its natural habitat including research and local community projects.

7. Tetepare

Solomon Islands – supporting community conservation programs and education scholarships towards protection of the largest uninhabited island in the South Pacific.

Wild Welfare

Zoos SA is a sponsor for Wild Welfare, a not for profit organisation that operates internationally to improve animal welfare practices in zoo and aquaria and end the suffering of animals held under poor captive conditions.

8. South African National Parks

Honorary Rangers

Kruger National Park, South Africa – support ranger counter-poaching efforts, particularly for rhinos along with conservation projects, community awareness, fundraising and on-ground support.

9. Cheetah Conservation Fund

Namibia – saving Cheetah in the wild through research, habitat restoration, human-wildlife conflict resolution and alternative livelihoods, and education activities.

10. Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary

Upper Guinea Forest, Sierra Leone – support community development and conservation programs to manage natural resources and to address significant threats to rainforest.

11. Painted Dog Conservation Inc

Zambia, Zimbabwe & Namibia - support conservation, research, community awareness and rehabilitation projects for large carnivore species such as the African Wild Dog, Cheetah, lion, leopard, hyena and the habitat they rely on.

Our approach

Crucial to our success is how we approach our work as individuals, teams and as an organisation. We promote, support and aspire to uphold the following principles and values.

Guiding principles

The care and wellbeing of our animals is a primary consideration at all times in line with our Animal Welfare Charter.

The role of the animals we care for will have a conservation focus and we will reflect our conservation message in all aspects of visitor experience.

We are uniquely placed to reach the community and share what we do to support conservation locally, nationally and globally.

We apply a science-based approach to our conservation work and adopt the highest standards for wildlife health management and husbandry.

We believe that everyone can contribute to conservation and we will deliver experiences that inspire action to save and protect species and their habitats.

We aim to provide visitors an experience that is easy, fun, friendly and meaningful.

We will apply and showcase sustainable practice in the planning, daily operation and management of our zoos.

We are all responsible for providing a safe, positive and enjoyable environment for staff, volunteers, members and partners.

Our success is influenced by innovation, creativity and continuous improvement.

Our partners, sponsors and donors are vital to growing our capacity to deliver on our goals within and beyond our gates.

We are independent and non-party political.

Our values

Passion

We inspire and influence by bringing pride, care and commitment to our work.

Innovation

We seek creative ways to achieve goals and turn ideas into reality by promoting a culture of learning and improving.

Respect

We respect individuals' values and encourage a culture of collaboration, diversity, listening and trust.

Engagement

We create experiences and connections that make a positive difference.

Effectiveness

We are accountable, focus on clearly defined goals and work as a team to turn words into action.



Future outlook

Zoos SA is a much valued South Australian institution with a strong supporter base of over 45,000 members, one of the highest visitor pay-to-enter admissions for a tourist attraction in South Australia, and an increasing digital audience of over 165,000 users.

Our unwavering priority for the next five years and beyond concerns our capacity to expand the conservation work we do. The growing need for conservation both within and beyond our gates means that zoos are increasingly important to support species on the edge of extinction and as recruiting and learning centres for the next generation. This work is absolutely critical to the survival of many species.

To achieve this, we must raise awareness of the changing role of the zoo and aim for every visitor to understand the tangible difference they can make just by visiting one of our sites. This is particularly important if we are to be catalysts for change, away from the experiences and perceptions of zoos of the past.

What we communicate, the experiences we promise and what we deliver must not only match the expectations of visitors but inspire them to take conservation action. As an organisation that has been around for over 130 years, equating to six generations of visitors, a primary challenge is maintaining infrastructure and renewing our sites to provide all visitors a fun, safe, recreational and educational experience. It also means supporting and developing the skills base of our staff and volunteers.

As a conservation charity, our business model is to grow income in order to invest it in conservation and the welfare of animals in our care. We are reliant on traditional sources of income – admissions, memberships, corporate sponsorship, grants and philanthropy. The pressures for zoo expansion and our ongoing efforts to improve animal care means that we need to diversify and grow our income as well as seek outside investment to deliver on the capital projects outlined in our 20 year Master Plan.

Our priorities

The strategies outlined in this strategic plan aim to address the following priorities:

- Communicating and raising public awareness about our conservation efforts and inspiring others to join us
- Creating new and improved visitor experiences that lead to people returning for multiple visits
- Strengthening partnerships and growing our support base to expand our conservation work
- Actively seeking investment for the roll out of the 20-year Master Plan
- Developing the organisation's capacity – skills, technology and infrastructure - to grow and invest for the long term
- Being a leader in the development of the state tourism industry and responding to the growth of international visitors.



Goal 1

Connect people with nature: engage, inform and inspire people to act

Measurable Outcomes

Our performance and success will be measured against:

- Public recognition as a conservation charity;
- Growth in membership base and admissions;
- Improved visitor knowledge and commitment to conservation action;
- Delivery of a high quality visitor experiences and formal learning programs.

Strategies

1.1 Inform

- Build community awareness of our conservation charity status.
- Provide clear and concise information about the threats to wildlife and habitats and the growing conservation role of zoos.
- Demonstrate how Zoos SA lives its mission by providing evidence of our conservation work.
- Work with other zoos to promote the important role that zoos play in conservation and to maximise the impact of programs and campaigns.

1.2 Experience

- Provide dynamic, immersive and high impact exhibits that allow visitors to see our animals display natural behaviours.
- Develop our sites to allow for visitor enjoyment in a wide range of weather conditions and to cater for the needs of all ages, cultures and abilities.
- Provide high quality learning opportunities through our education programs, animal based learning experiences and presentations.
- Continue to provide and further develop formal education, tertiary and professional programs.
- Support the training and development of staff and volunteers to provide high quality visitor experiences and learning programs.
- Seek feedback from our visitors to ensure that we continue to improve and move with their expectations.
- Use new technologies to further engage and entertain our visitors.

1.3 Inspire

- Continue to develop programs and communications to encourage visitors to take conservation action.
- Actively encourage visitors to become members of Zoos SA in order to deepen our engagement with them.

Goal 2

**Save species
from extinction:
conservation, wildlife
health and research**

Measureable Outcomes

Our performance and success will be measured against:

- Alignment of the zoo collection with our conservation strategies;
- Investment in conservation activities;
- Positive conservation outcomes achieved through research, programs and projects.

Strategies

2.1 Conservation

- Deliver wildlife and habitat conservation projects at a local, regional and international level.
- Maintain a genetically diverse collection of animals on our sites and deliver conservation messages using our exhibits, presentations, education programs, media and communications.
- Continue our commitment to the Australasian and Global Species Management Programs.
- Manage conservation breeding programs to support recovery actions, including the maintenance of insurance populations and the successful return of species to the wild.
- Lead the development and implementation of ex-situ conservation programs providing the highest level of animal welfare and husbandry practices.
- Improve habitats through restoration, revegetation and effective land and pest management strategies.

2.2 Wildlife Health

- Work within and outside the wildlife health sector to improve how we detect, communicate and respond to wildlife disease and its impacts on species populations.

2.3 Research

- Partner with other organisations to deliver research and share resources for positive conservation outcomes.
- Act as an advocate for wildlife conservation, animal welfare and the environment.
- Provide advice on key conservation issues and policy.

Goal 3

Work in an ethical and sustainable manner influencing others to follow our example

Measurable Outcomes

Our performance and success will be measured against:

- High standards of animal care;
- Minimal carbon footprint;
- High standards of corporate and social responsibility.

Strategies

3.1 Animal Wellbeing

- Undertake regular reviews to ensure the animal welfare standards adopted by Zoos SA are of the highest level and that we continue to maintain full member accreditation of the Zoo and Aquarium Association.
- Under the guidance of Zoos SA's Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee ensure the wellbeing of all the animals in our collection in relation to nutrition, environment, health, behaviour and positive mental well-being, in line with our Animal Welfare Charter.

3.2 Ethical & Sustainable Practice

- Display leadership in identifying and putting into practice measures that minimise the organisation's carbon footprint, improve the condition of our natural resources (land, water) and mitigate natural risks (bushfire and flood).
- Apply environmental sustainability design criteria to our project planning for upgrades of existing assets and new developments.
- Use and sell products and services that reflect ethical and sustainable practice (such as fair trade, recycled and sustainable sources) where this offers a viable alternative.
- Identify opportunities to encourage suppliers and contractors to operate in a sustainable manner consistent with our goals.

Goal 4

**Grow a sound and
advancing organisation,
applying an innovative
business approach**

Measureable Outcomes

Our performance and success will be measured against:

- A well developed and motivated team of staff and volunteers;
- Partnerships that further conservation objectives and achievements;
- Delivery of priority asset upgrades and new developments;
- Financial sustainability;
- Safety of staff, volunteers and visitors.

Strategies

4.1 Our Team

- Attract staff and volunteers through a selection and recruitment process that reflects our core values.
- Provide our staff and volunteers opportunities for training and development, supporting their performance and growth through our People Plan.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for our staff, volunteers and visitors.
- Continue to develop the volunteer program to ensure it supports changing business demands.

4.2 Our Partners

- Continue to develop partnerships with like-minded organisations to ensure more effective use of resources and expand our capacity to achieve positive conservation outcomes.
- Understand and recognise the needs of partners and stakeholders to maximise the mutual value of these relationships.
- Create new opportunities for partners, sponsor and donors to invest in capital projects.

4.3 Innovation

- Create quality products, experiences and services that exceed the expectations of customers, increase our income stream and reflect our goals and values.
- Support a culture of research and development and provide opportunities for shared learning and involvement in planning and decision-making.
- Encourage innovation to improve corporate practice including the use of information communication technology, risk and governance policies, people and performance.

4.4 Sustainable Finances

- Maintain financial sustainability that will ensure an annual operating surplus, and planned debt reduction.
- Continuously review our level of investment in facilities and infrastructure to meet and exceed standards.



With species on the brink of extinction, the work of our zoos has never been more important.

As a conservation charity, we will do everything we can to be a powerful catalyst for positive change, but we need your support.

Please support our important work by visiting us, becoming a member or becoming a Wildlife Guardian.

How you can support Zoos SA:

- Visit us
- Become a member
- Donate
- Become a corporate sponsor
- Become a Wildlife Guardian