



Speech by

# Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Australia Zoo, Cooperative Agreement

**Hon. LH NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (10.16 am): This afternoon I will travel up to the Sunshine Coast with the member for Glass House and we will be signing, on behalf of the Queensland government, a new cooperative agreement with Australia Zoo. The objective of this memorandum of understanding, which I will sign with Australia Zoo's Terri Irwin, is to implement more actions to save the very rare northern hairy-nosed wombat and other endangered species. We were doing a Google search this morning and found that the northern hairy-nosed wombat is actually more endangered than the panda.

**Mrs Sullivan:** There's only 60 of them left in the wild.

**Ms NELSON-CARR:** 132 but we are building on that.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms NELSON-CARR:** You need to listen to this because it is important. This is an endangered species. The northern hairy-nosed wombat is a marsupial with a backward facing pouch. It is one of the world's most endangered species. It is a mammal. Fewer than 150 are living in just one area, at Epping Forest National Park, a scientific park, near Clermont in central Queensland. The small population that remain is susceptible to disease, fire and the adverse affects of inbreeding. Its name comes from its muzzle which is covered with short brown hairs. Worldwide only four other mammals are believed to have lower populations.

I am delighted to report that this new accord expands for the next two years on a partnership between the zoo and the Environmental Protection Agency that has been in place for the past five years. Terri Irwin has vowed to continue Steve Irwin's legacy and his work in protection of endangered species. She has expressed her enthusiasm for this new agreement.

Two previous agreements with Australia Zoo have led to significant breakthroughs in crocodile research through the world-first Crocs in Space project and the establishment of a koala hospital. Australia Zoo and the EPA will build on the agency's ongoing efforts to bring the northern hairy-nosed wombat back from the brink of extinction. Priority tasks to help achieve that important objective will include maintaining and increasing the existing Epping Forest colony and establishing new colonies. I really welcome this memorandum of understanding and thank Terri Irwin and Australia Zoo—and the member for Glass House, who has been a champion in support of this—for their continuing harmonious working relationship with the EPA.