



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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AUSTRALIA ZOO

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (9.56 pm): The 15th of November saw many in Glass House, in Queensland, in Australia—indeed, throughout the world—celebrate the extraordinary life of Steve Irwin. But the celebrations started several days early for the Irwin family and the team at Australia Zoo. On the Friday evening before, Australia Zoo once again, for the third year in a row, took out the award for the state's best major tourist attraction. With this award, the zoo automatically entered the illustrious ranks of the Queensland Tourism Awards Hall of Fame and gave its competitors some respite, becoming ineligible as a result for similar awards next year.

Terri, Bindi, Robert, Wes and the team followed that evening with the Steve Irwin Day Gala Dinner at Portside, Hamilton, on the Saturday evening. It was with significant pleasure that I was able to attend. Whilst the evening was designed to be enjoyed, with performances by Jessica Mauboy, an appearance by WWE wrestling superstar Edge, and MCs Steve Jacobs and Sofie Formica, it also served a very serious purpose: as a fundraiser for one of Steve's greatest passions—conservation.

All of the funds raised on the evening will go towards the Wildlife Warriors conservation programs at the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve on the Wenlock River in Cape York. As many members will be aware, the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve is a wetland conservation property and a tribute to the Crocodile Hunter himself, Steve Irwin. The 135,000-hectare property is home to a set of important spring-fed wetlands which provide a critical water source to threatened habitat, provide a permanent flow of water to the Wenlock River and is home to rare and vulnerable plants and wildlife.

Steve Irwin Day on 15 November was also the one-year anniversary of the new Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors Australian Wildlife Hospital facilities. On the anniversary staff were busy treating the average of 30 animals that come through the hospital's doors every single day and caring for over 80 patients that are recovering from their injuries and illness within the hospital. The 26 full-time staff, which include veterinarians, vet nurses and admin staff, and over 90 volunteers, have already treated over 6,300 animals this year. During its one year of operation, the new hospital has seen over 700 koalas, over 2,500 birds and almost 300 freshwater and marine turtles. Steve Irwin Day itself, Sunday, 15 November, went off with a bang at Australia Zoo—with plenty of crocodiles, plenty of 'crikeys' and more than a little bit of khaki.