



Speech by


Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australia Zoo

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.45 am): Madam Speaker, can I start by acknowledging and congratulating the members for Everton, Mirani and Gympie on their recent elevations.

The Queensland government today will commemorate Steve Irwin Day and show our commitment to investing in our environment for the future by signing two memoranda of understanding with Australia Zoo. Later today I will join Australia Zoo Director, Terry Irwin, to sign a memorandum of understanding for the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program and a memorandum of understanding for the conservation of wildlife in Queensland. I applaud Australia Zoo for the positive and highly productive relationship they have with the Queensland government to deliver for the conservation of wildlife in Queensland.

It has now been 10 years since signing the first memorandum of understanding, and much has been achieved. The Crocs in Space research initiative developed a world-first project for satellite tracking estuarine crocodiles in Queensland. Enormous knowledge has been gained about crocodile behaviour, movement and populations as a result of this partnership. There has also been considerable collaboration on koala research, rescue and rehabilitation through Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's Moggill Koala Hospital.

The renewed memorandum of understanding will provide enhanced opportunities for the department and the zoo to achieve tangible wildlife conservation outcomes. The Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program currently has 45 rangers across Northern Queensland caring for our pristine waterways and protected species, and our government has committed to adding a further 30 in Cape York and another 10 in Western Queensland over the course of this government.

The memorandum of understanding outlines a framework for undertaking a range of collaborative activities between the rangers and Australia Zoo. Several of our ranger communities are working directly with the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York assisting in flora and fauna surveys, including crocodile management. Recently rangers worked with Australia Zoo and staff from my department to deliver a junior ranger activity to school students in Cape York Peninsula.

The signing of both memoranda demonstrates the Newman government's commitment to participating in a cooperative approach with Australia Zoo to further wildlife conservation, environmental management in remote communities, research, education and rehabilitation.