



AUSTRALIA ZOO WILDLIFE WARRIORS
**AUSTRALIAN
WILDLIFE
HOSPITAL**

Media Release

15 November 2008

Wildlife Warriors officially open the world's largest wildlife hospital

Steve Irwin's dream is realized on the second annual Steve Irwin Day

Today Terri Irwin officially opened Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors' major project - the new Australian Wildlife Hospital - in her capacity as Patron of the pre-eminent conservation charity. This state-of-the-art wildlife treatment facility, which commenced construction in October 2007, is of international significance and will greatly expand the surgical, rehabilitation, research and training capabilities of the Hospital.

The original Hospital facility – a small, converted avocado packing shed – opened in March 2004 in memory of Lyn Irwin (Steve's mother). Since then, thousands of visitors have been through the doors and been touched by the Hospital's very special patients and the work of the dedicated team who care for them 24/7.

The opening ceremony - timed to coincide with the second annual Steve Irwin Day celebration - realized Steve's dream to establish the world's largest wildlife hospital at Beerwah to honour Lyn who had been a pioneer in wildlife care in Queensland. The new Hospital is also a fitting and lasting legacy to the great and original Wildlife Warrior himself.

Steve's dream has already been providing a lifeline for nature's innocent victims – providing sick, injured and orphaned wildlife with leading-edge treatment and rehabilitation before eventual release back to the wild. Whilst the facility opened on a small scale, it is now Australia's busiest wildlife treatment facility. The number of patients admitted to the Hospital in 2008 is on track to exceed 6,000 and all have been treated on a "no fee" basis. "Steve felt that money should not be an impediment to every patient receiving the highest standard of veterinary care. We're very proud of the fact that there's no monetary limit placed on any animal that is treated here," said Terri.

The demand for the Hospital's charitable services is ever-increasing and the new facility has the scope to admit 10,000 annually. In line with this anticipated growth, the Hospital's operating costs are now likely to exceed \$2M annually. These costs will be underwritten by major sponsor, Australia Zoo.

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The new Hospital's impressive size – 1,300 square metres – cements its “world's largest” status however it is the building's environmentally-friendly construction elements that set the building apart from other medical facilities, with the Australia Zoo Wildlife Warrior team having gone to great lengths to remain faithful to the organisation's conservation ethos.

At the outset the Australia Zoo Wildlife Warrior team approached Andrew Webb of WD Architects at Cooran, recognizing that he had the right “green” design credentials to bring their vision to life. Some of the other significant features of the new Hospital include:

- The building is oriented to the north for effective sun shading in warm months and sun penetration into the building in cooler months. Openings on the east and west of the building are minimized to avoid excessive heat gain and glare.
- It has a high thermal mass internal structure coupled with highly insulating building envelope to regulate and maintain comfortable internal temperatures and maximize efficiency of mechanical systems.
- There is extensive use of operable windows for natural ventilation to limit the time periods that mechanical ventilation is required.
- Use of natural, low-embodied energy, low-toxicity, renewable and/or readily recyclable materials wherever practical. This includes straw bale and rammed earth walls, low toxicity paints and floor finishes, low toxicity cabinetry boards and ceiling linings.
- Extensive referral to Ecospecifier to evaluate product choices.
- No use of timber from rainforests or other sensitive ecosystems. Timber use is limited to plantation pine and engineered structural timber, FSC-certified, CBFT and local farm forestry sources.
- Timber doors and windows for energy-efficiency and low-embodied energy.
- Materials, fixtures and finishes selected and detailed for longevity.
- Rainwater harvesting. The roof area is 1535 m² - it will collect 1535 litres for every 1 mm of rain.
- Water efficient plumbing fixtures and fittings.
- Design for universal accessibility.
- Daylighting of major use areas to limit the need for electric lighting.
- Use of energy-efficient luminaires.
- Use of 25% fly-ash concrete.
- Use of local and Australian products and services where possible to limit greenhouse gases / embodied energy of transport.
- The building is designed for 'constructability' to limit waste and material use.

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The Australian Wildlife Hospital has strong links with a number of universities and wildlife organizations and is committed to passing on its extensive knowledge of native animals and best care practices to veterinary students and wildlife trainees who undertake practical work experience and course work at the Hospital. Terri Irwin confirmed that the sharing of knowledge will also be expanded now that the new Hospital has been completed - "This work is going to continue into the future and will see more people from around the world having the opportunity to teach and learn at this beautiful facility."

Under the supervision of founding staff members, General Manager Gail Gipp and renowned veterinarian Dr Jon Hanger, the Australian Wildlife Hospital team will also be increasing its commitment to ongoing research into wildlife disease. A major focus for 2009 will be advancing vital research into koala disease in association with the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology.

The Australian Government generously contributed \$2.5M towards the Hospital project, with the surplus cost met by a small number of sponsors - including major sponsor Australia Zoo, construction partners Ridgemill Project Management, WD Architects, The Eaton Electrical Group, Walton Construction (Qld) Pty Ltd - and the results of the charity's fundraising efforts.

Visitors to the Sunshine Coast now have the opportunity to visit this unique facility, with four guided tours offered daily. Treatment viewing areas, conference facilities and opportunities to speak to Wildlife Warrior staff combine to give guests an opportunity to learn even more about Australia's unique wildlife and become true Wildlife Warriors themselves.

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For further information please contact:

Carolyn Beaton
Public Relations Consultant
Australian Wildlife Hospital
Telephone 0439 030 260 or 07 5436 2097 (Hospital)
Email carolynb@wildlifewarriors.org.au