

## **Media Release**

Thursday 8 June 2017



# **ICONIC WARRAWONG WILDLIFE SANCTUARY ACQUIRED FOR FULL RESTORATION BY AWARD WINNING W.A. ZOO OWNERS**

Warrawong Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the Adelaide Hills, was a national wildlife attraction. Although closed for the past four years, it has now been acquired by Western Australian zoo owners and is being completely restored as a premium tourist attraction.

Founded in 1969, at its peak, Warrawong Wildlife Sanctuary, on Stock Road, Mylor, occupied approximately 85 acres. Some of it was subsequently subdivided by property developers from 2003, leaving a remnant 28 acres. The last occupant of the site, ZooSA, closed it as a sanctuary in 2013.

This acreage has now been saved for future sanctuary use by husband and wife zoo owners, David Cobbold and Narelle MacPherson, from Western Australia. They purchased the Sanctuary for an undisclosed sum and plan to reinstate it as a contemporary wildlife sanctuary, featuring hospitality, accommodation, function, and education facilities.

The couple is extremely confident of success, having previously transformed a derelict bird park, an hour south of Perth, into the renowned and well patronised Peel Zoo. The Zoo, home to around 100 species of predominantly Australian animals, is also a famous breeding home for the critically endangered Tasmanian Devils.

Peel Zoo was recently recognized as a 'bucket list' tourism destination by Experience Oz ([www.experienceoz.com.au](http://www.experienceoz.com.au)).

Mr Cobbold today likened the purchase of Warrawong Sanctuary to the beginning of Peel Zoo 12 years ago. "There's not a lot you can't achieve if you have the vision and the work ethic. We are determined to reinstate this wonderful site back into a premium wildlife sanctuary."

Ms MacPherson said, "Even though this site was abandoned 4 years ago, some of the animal populations are still here and there is great infrastructure for animals and public alike. That gives us a strong foundation so we can reinvigorate Warrawong as a jewel in the crown of the Adelaide Hills."



Under the couple's guidance, Peel Zoo built an attraction rate of 45,000 visitors a year, it employs 5 full-time staff, and provides hands-on, vocational training to a raft of students. Ms MacPherson said there would be a real focus on 'education' at Warrawong.

"Peel Zoo and Warrawong Sanctuary are natural outdoor classrooms. We'll definitely be developing material that supports teachers across a wide range of subjects and provides educational opportunities for the tens of thousands of children that will come through our gates."

The name of the Sanctuary is being retained. "Warrawong has carved a reputation as a significant contributor to Australia's wildlife conservation. It is the birthplace of feral-proof fencing, cat curfews, and the chocolate Easter Bilby. On a personal note, our head zookeeper and our Vet, in WA, camped here when they were school children. We can't emphasise enough just how important it is to honour the significance of Warrawong," Mr Cobbold said.

There is a substantial amount of work that needs to be done at the Sanctuary before it re-opens to the public. This includes refurbishment of the facilities and the restoration of the ecosystem.

Mr Cobbold said the site's kitchen is in desperate need of refurbishment, but restoring the balance of flora and fauna would be more of a challenge, especially as the original water supply for the Sanctuary was sold years ago.

The couple is working on a solution to that.

They have sold their house in WA and Peel Zoo is on the market as the couple wishes to concentrate fully on Warrawong's re-opening.

"We have already received overwhelming support from local Hills residents for our plans," they said.

**Narelle and David are asking people to follow the transformation of Warrawong Sanctuary, and connect with them, through the website, [www.warrawongws.com.au](http://www.warrawongws.com.au)**

\*\*\* END RELEASE \*\*\*

**A media conference is being held on site at Warrawong Wildlife Sanctuary, 47 Stock Road, Mylor, at 11am today, Thursday 8th June, 2017.**

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## Media Coverage

In Daily - <http://indaily.com.au/news/2017/06/08/long-closed-warrawong-restored-wildlife-sanctuary/>

Adelaide Now - <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/adelaide-hills-warrawong-wildlife-sanctuary-acquired-by-wa-couple/news-story/113683e86a550fb0078042a72797a2bf>

Ten News - <https://www.facebook.com/tenadelaide/videos/1484587298272678/>

Nine News – <https://www.facebook.com/9NewsAdelaide/videos/1711619772475318/>

Seven News – <https://www.facebook.com/7NewsAdelaide/videos/1579604192070230/>

The West - <https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/wa-couple-to-begin-warrawong-rebirth-bc-5463946353001>

ABC Online - [http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-08/warrawong-sanctuary-to-reopen-with-new-owners/8601664?smid=Page:%20ABC%20Adelaide-Facebook\\_Organic&WT.tsrc=Facebook\\_Organic&sf86363114=1](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-08/warrawong-sanctuary-to-reopen-with-new-owners/8601664?smid=Page:%20ABC%20Adelaide-Facebook_Organic&WT.tsrc=Facebook_Organic&sf86363114=1)

Radio 5aa - <https://soundcloud.com/fiveaa/warrawong-is-back>

Conservation Journal - <http://conservationjournal.world/editorial/warrawong-wildlife-sanctuary-to-reopen/>

Podcast: That Paleo Show - <http://thewellnesscouch.com/tps/tps-231-is-conservation-paleo>

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Connect with us through our website for your chance to win a behind the scenes tour of Warrawong this month.

<http://www.warrawongws.com.au/>

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