

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Supporting the road back for Australia's zoos and aquariums**

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) strongly welcomes the almost \$95 million Federal Government funding lifeline for eligible zoos and aquariums around our nation to help maintain their viability on the future road back for our tourism and visitor economy.

ATIC and separately its State and Territory industry council members see this as an important measure including the social investment being made in supporting animal welfare alongside the clear direct business support and destination attraction benefit, having being directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said one of our tourism industry's consistent drivers, be it to locals, interstate visitors and international travellers, is our unique and compelling nature-based offering, which brings Australia out from the pack.

"Zoos and Aquariums across our country are destinations in their own right! The Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo is not just a crucial visitor magnet and economic driver for central NSW, but also delivers a safe and compelling Australian nature-based offering that is a standout globally," Mr Westaway said.

"The same can be said for dozens of other zoological and marine life offerings that stretch right across all States and Territories. Monarto Safari Park in South Australia is but a further example which has received government infrastructure support due to its importance to South Australia's own visitor economy.

"ATIC welcomes the Federal Government's recognition that for regional tourism in particular to again generate green shoots, let alone move down a pathway of both sustainable and greater growth over time, that our zoos and aquariums need to continue to exist to play an important role in future visitor attraction."

Mr Westaway noted and acknowledged the direct tourism benefit that would be created by this initiative, delivered from the Federal Government's recently established Relief and Recovery Fund and ATIC members looked forward to its speedy application for this measure.

**Further Details:**

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