

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 4 November 2020

MAKING FAMILY MEMORIES AT NEW HOME FOR ELEPHANTS

A trip to the zoo will be made even more memorable, thanks to a major investment in our zoos – boosting tourism, creating jobs and ensuring more families can experience the wonders of the animal world.

Until recently, our zoos were forced to close their doors as Victoria worked to drive down case numbers. Now our zoos are open again, we want to make them even more special – giving more families more opportunities to create lifelong memories.

The upcoming *Victorian Budget 2020/21* will deliver \$84 million to transform Werribee Zoo into Australia's leading open range zoo – including building a new home for the city's much-loved Asian elephant herd, currently housed at Melbourne Zoo.

Werribee Zoo's redevelopment will deliver a world-class experience, with a new elephant sanctuary to house six Asian elephants, a tree top Sky Safari gondola, a new specially designed site for rhinos and bison, and a brand-new waterhole precinct.

The new elephant sanctuary will be the gold standard in animal welfare with the herd able to roam freely over 22 hectares, including a walking trail to guide visitors through the landscape.

The relocation of the elephant herd completes Stage One of Zoos Victoria's 2030 strategy, as well as creating new space for further development opportunities at Melbourne Zoo – already one of Victoria's favourite attractions.

The expansion will create almost 350 local jobs – including 90 direct jobs looking after animals and visitors once the exhibits are up and running – as well as increasing the number of visitors and tourists through the gates from more than 680,000 in 2018/19 to one million visitors annually.

Construction on the elephant sanctuary and tree top Sky Safari gondola will begin soon and create an initial 41 jobs.

For those Victorians worried about the expense of a day out with the family, we will also extend our "Kids Free" Policy until June 2021. That means free admission to Werribee Open Range Zoo, Melbourne Zoo and Healesville Sanctuary for young Victorians aged under 16 years on weekends, public holidays and during school holidays.

Once completed the Werribee Zoo redevelopment is expected to contribute over \$17.8 million annually to Victoria's economy.

The Werribee Open Range Zoo is currently open to visitors who live within 25 kilometres of the Zoo and bookings can be made online at zoo.org.au

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"This year, we've all been reminded just how special a family visit to the zoo really is."

"With this redevelopment, we'll give more families more opportunity to enjoy that precious time together."

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Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"This funding will make Werribee Open Range Zoo an even better experience for locals and visitors – while at the same time ensuring our wonderful Asian elephants can enjoy the gold standard in animal welfare they deserve."

Quote attributable to Member for Werribee Tim Pallas

"The expansion of Werribee Open Range Zoo will create jobs in Melbourne's west boosting the local economy and attracting more tourists – and more tourist dollars – to our great community."