

# Media Release

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Tuesday, 11 June 2024

## TRUNKLOADS OF FUN AWAIT FAMILIES AT WERRIBEE ZOO

An unforgettable experience awaits families at the Werribee Open Range Zoo – with construction reaching the halfway mark on Victoria’s new home for the majestic Asian Elephant herd.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos today toured the construction site of two new Elephant Barns and 21-hectare habitat that is set to welcome a family of Asian elephants from Melbourne Zoo later this year.

The new barns are being delivered as part of the Allan Labor Government’s \$88 million Werribee Open Range Zoo Expansion project which will see Werribee become the new home for Asian elephants in Victoria.

Built within Werribee Zoo’s expansive 21-hectare elephant habitat, the herd will benefit from seven different yards, elephant overpasses connecting the yards, two mega pools and a visitor walking trail.

The weather-proof barns will have ceilings towering over 9-metres and luxurious two-metre deep sandpit providing elephants with comfortable sleeping mounds.

The barns have also been designed to support ongoing elephant healthcare and wellbeing, with a training facility at the back to allow keepers to deliver regular elephant health checks – including blood tests, weigh-ins, and oral health procedures.

Visitors will be able to view all areas of the barn while two dedicated overpass bridges will allow Asian elephants to pass over visitor walking trails.

The Werribee Open Range Zoo expansion covers an area of elephantine proportions, equivalent to the size of five MCG stadiums and the entire Melbourne Zoo – creating more than 100 local construction jobs in the process.

This world-class experience is expected to open to visitors in early 2025 after the entire Asian Elephant herd moves to their new home in Melbourne’s west later this year.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos**

*“We are thrilled to deliver a home for Asian elephants in Melbourne’s west that will support the world-leading care requirements of Zoos Victoria’s growing multi-generational herd.”*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Development Victoria Colin Brooks**

*“We are proud to be working with Development Victoria and Zoos Victoria to build this world-class habitat for the Asian elephant herd, with the family set to relocate to Melbourne’s west later this year.”*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Point Cook Matthew Hilakari**

*“These massive barns will provide year-round comfort for the growing herd with deep sand beds and dedicated training facilities.”*

### **Quotes attributable to CEO Zoos Victoria Dr Jenny Gray**

*“Seeing the towering barns take shape in the landscape is a milestone moment that signals just how close we are to migrating our nine-strong elephant herd from Melbourne Zoo to their new home at Werribee Open Range Zoo.”*

**Media Contact:** Emma Muscatello 0439 837 862 | [emma.muscatello@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:emma.muscatello@minstaff.vic.gov.au)