



2003 GOLD RHINO WINNER TARONGA WESTERN PLAINS ZOO



Taronga Western Plains Zoo General Manager Matt Fuller believes one of the Zoo's secrets to success is 'ensuring we are always reflecting and looking through the lens of the visitor.' "That way we develop a meaningful understanding of the success of what we are doing now and how we develop the product for the future," he said.

Opening on 28th February 1977, the facility was the first Zoo in Australia to be constructed on the open range principle. It was also the first zoo to be built in Australia in 60 years.

Today, the multi-award winning Zoo boasts a workforce of 300 employees and is home to over 500 animals from across the globe. It is the only Zoo where visitors can walk, drive, bike or cart around the 6km circuit.

Over the past 38 years, Taronga Western Plains Zoo has developed a global reputation for being so much more than a zoo – it has become a world-renowned centre for wildlife conservation, education and research.

"Every employee is incredibly proud of the fact that the Zoo has provided international recognition for Dubbo and has linked every member of the population to the conservation that we actively participate in and support," Mr Fuller said.

"We are also incredibly proud of the support we get locally whether it's through our amazing dedicated volunteers who contribute many thousands of hours or our now 10,000 local Dubbo Zoo Friend members that advocate for the Zoo each and every day."

Mr Fuller has been TWPZ General Manager since January 2008, with a previous tenure from 2002 to 2004. He has been instrumental in driving a process of continuous improvement, seeking innovative investment in product development opportunities which compel visitors to support the TWPZ as a destination "and importantly support the efforts we make in animal care and conservation."

"As an example, we are very proud of the outcomes we have achieved with the three recently developed overnight experiences which now attract around



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30,000 visitor nights to the Zoo and our region, and despite their infancy, have already won awards at a State and national level," Mr Fuller said.

He said winning a Gold Rhino Award in 2003 was very special and very important at a local level.

"Taronga Western Plains Zoo is a proud Gold Rhino winner and we value the recognition from the local community as well as at a regional and national level," Mr Fuller said. "The Zoo was a foundation partner of the Rhino Awards and I think it is still as important as ever to provide the opportunity to the Dubbo business community to celebrate success and to recognise and reward businesses who contribute to our economy and also to our community as a whole."

Since then the Zoo has gone on to win many awards including being named Australia's top tourist attraction at the 2013 Australian Tourism Awards and making the Trip Advisor Hall of Fame for receiving a Certificate of Excellence five years in a row.

However, the internationally-renowned Zoo is most widely recognised for its success in the area of caring for and conserving endangered species.

"The Zoo's world-famous work with the Black Rhinoceros has made an enormous contribution to the conservation of this species now under extreme threat," Mr Fuller said.

According to Mr Fuller, it's not just the animals, scenic circuits and breeding programs that make Dubbo's Taronga Western Plains Zoo so special.

"It's the people who work here that make the Zoo very special," he said.

"Their pride and their passion for the animals and the Zoo as a whole is inspirational.

"They have worked tremendously hard to put our Zoo and Dubbo on the global stage."