

The Sydney Zoo

State significant development application (SSD 7228)

8 September 2017

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission has granted consent to the Sydney Zoo project, subject to conditions of consent. The proposal corresponds to the NSW Government's objectives for the Western Sydney Parklands and for Western Sydney, and provides employment and tourism opportunities.

The proposal recognises that Western Sydney is growing rapidly and can support additional tourist infrastructure. The Commission found that Sydney Zoo would be located on a site that is readily accessible to many residents in Western Sydney, and would allow those residents access to a facility that would otherwise require more extensive travel to Sydney's east. The proposal incorporates a number of social benefits that are supported by the Commission, including work placements for students; employment for Aboriginal people; community engagement and outreach programs; and educational programs for school students.

On 22 November 2016, the Department of Planning and Environment referred the development application for the Sydney Zoo to the Planning Assessment Commission for determination under the Ministerial delegation of 14 September 2011. Lynelle Briggs AO, Chair of the Commission, Roger Fisher and Alan Coutts constituted the Commission to determine this application.

The Commission conducted a public meeting on 14 December 2016 and met with representatives from the Department, Sydney Zoo Pty Ltd (the Applicant), the Blacktown City Council, Featherdale Wildlife Park (Featherdale) and the Taronga Conservation Society Australia. The Commission also conducted a Sydney Zoo site visit and visited Featherdale.

A recurring sentiment expressed by those who spoke at the public meeting was the potential for the proposed Sydney Zoo to adversely impact on the conservation and social programs provided by Featherdale. The range of educational, conservation and community engagement programs provided by Featherdale, and developed over Featherdale's 40-year tenure in Western Sydney, were identified by speakers as having significant social value locally, regionally and nationally.

Based on the information originally available for review, the Commission identified a high level of uncertainty in the assessment of social impacts. The Commission was persuaded by the depth of concern expressed at the public meeting, and by Featherdale and Taronga, to seek additional information from the Department and Sydney Zoo in February. The additional information provided in July dealt with the design and operation of Sydney Zoo, the health and welfare of animals, and the risks and costs of social impacts that could result if Sydney Zoo proceeds, including the impacts for Featherdale.

The Commission has found that the risk and severity of potential impacts to Featherdale and the socially beneficial programs that it offers do not warrant refusal of the Sydney Zoo project. The Commission is satisfied that if impacts arise, they are likely to be balanced by social benefits offered by Sydney Zoo and its mitigation strategies.

To inform its determination the Commission had regard to the applicants Environmental Impact Assessment, The Department's assessment report supplementary information provided by the

Applicant, Featherdale Wildlife Park and Department, submissions made to both the Department and the Commission and presentations at the public meeting. The Commission has carefully balanced the economic, social and environmental factors in its determination of the project.

The Commission is satisfied that the Sydney Zoo proposal (SSD 7228) benefits outweigh the potential impacts and has, subject to conditions, determined that the project be approved.

A detailed determination report for the project is also available on the Commission's website.



Lynelle Briggs AO
Chair of the Commission



Roger Fisher
Member of the Commission



Alan Coutts
Member of the Commission