

Hon Geoff Brock MP
Minister for Regional Development

Hon Leon Bignell MP
Minister for Tourism

Monday, 13 November, 2017

Australian-first lion experience launches at Monarto Zoo

Lions 360, an Australian-first experience at Monarto Zoo, has officially been launched today ahead of being opened to the public from this Sunday.

Developed by Zoos SA, Lions 360 allows visitors to safely walk through a tunnel under the lion enclosure and emerge in the heart of the 10 hectare habitat of the lions' den, surrounded by up to 11 lions.

Monarto Zoo is the largest open plain zoo in the world. Now home to the only 360 degree lion encounter in Australia, Monarto Zoo has cemented itself as a leading Australian and South Australian tourism attraction.

Lions 360 has been co-funded by the South Australian Government, Zoos SA, the Commonwealth Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure program and ElectraNet.

Monarto Zoo attracts over 130,000 visitors a year. The Lions 360 experience is expected to increase visitors by an extra 3000 people annually, spending an estimated \$1 million in the region annually.

Background

Monarto Zoo is the largest open-range zoo in the world and is home to more than 500 animals and 50 exotic and native mammals, birds and reptiles.

The South Australian Government allocated \$360,000 through the Economic Sustainability Program, Zoos SA \$720,000, and the Commonwealth Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure program \$350,000 to complete the project. ElectraNet contributed \$300,000 over three years.

Quotes attributable to Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock

The State Government is proud to have supported this project with a \$360,000 grant from the Economic Sustainability Program, which supports regional initiatives facilitating strong, vibrant and sustainable regional industries and communities.

The attraction of this unique experience, the only 360 degree lion encounter in Australia, will ensure that Monarto Zoo remains one of the state's most popular destinations for locals, interstate and international visitors.

The increase in visitors drawn to Monarto Zoo by the Lions 360 experience will also provide a boost to local businesses and tour operators, with the attraction offering an opportunity for visitors to extend their stay and explore the region.

Quotes attributable to Tourism Minister Leon Bignell

We have amazing wildlife experiences in South Australia, from holding a koala to diving with Great White sharks, and now, being able to get up close to lions and actually hand them food.

Lions 360 is another example of the great work being done across the state to encourage visitors to South Australia, and for locals to explore their own backyard.

We've pumped an additional \$70 million into the tourism sector to market South Australia nationally and internationally and our visitor economy is now worth an all-time high \$6.3 billion. New attractions like this help to make sure we are on track to reach our target of \$8 billion by 2020.

Quotes attributable to Zoos SA Chief Executive Elaine Bensted

Originally announced as part of our 20-year Master Plan, Zoos SA is thrilled to have federal and State Government support, as well as support from ElectraNet to bring this unique experience to life at Monarto Zoo.

Lions 360 is a truly hair-raising experience with visitors able to walk through a tunnel and emerge in the heart of the lions' den, putting you within clawing range of one of Australia's largest lion prides in absolute safety.

With as few as 20,000 lions remaining in the wild, Lions 360 will allow us to continue our work as a conservation charity raising awareness for this amazing species, and we're looking forward to this unique project bringing around 3,000 new visitors to Monarto Zoo each year.