



Media Release

Giant Pandas to Call Australia Home

Australia's Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer today announced during APEC that agreement had been reached for a pair of young Giant Pandas to be loaned to Australia for 10 years as part of a cooperative conservation agreement between the China Wildlife Conservation Association and Adelaide Zoo. The first time Giant pandas will have been exhibited in Australia since 1988.

Dr Chris West, CEO of The Royal Zoological Society of South Australia (RZSSA) said today, "Adelaide Zoo is an organisation with a reputation for strong conservation programs. We are delighted that a pair of pandas will soon call Australia home as their presence in Australia will act as a symbol for international collaboration as we work together to secure a future for wildlife."

The cooperative conservation agreement provides support for forest protection, field monitoring and training in Australia for key staff from Wolong Centre. The RZSSA will facilitate training for our colleagues in the front line of conservation in China."

Adelaide Zoo has a long and successful history of managing a wide range of carnivores, including Red panda and bears and has the technical capabilities and strong scientific links with South Australian Universities that will help play a large part in delivering conservation success in China.

The two Giant pandas coming to Adelaide Zoo are a genetically important pairing. It is hoped that male "Wang Wang" which translates to "Net" (born 31/08/05) and female "Funi" which means "Lucky Girl" (born 23/08/06) will breed successfully at Adelaide Zoo when they reach sexual maturity.

The team at the RZSSA which manages Adelaide Zoo and Monarto Zoo will build new facilities including a panda habitat, new entrance and a perimeter fence to be completed in 2009. "Our skills in animal management are such that the level of care will be world class", Dr West says.

“We will send our staff to Wolong Centre in China to receive training”, Dr West stated. “Our staff will also visit Giant panda facilities at San Diego Zoo, where they have successfully bred and managed Giant pandas and where the climate is similar to that in South Australia”.

Adelaide Zoo has an extensive 14 hectare browse plantation, 20 minutes drive from Adelaide Zoo that will be used to grow up to five species of bamboo.

There are approximately 250 Giant pandas in captivity, with a only a handful in international zoos including Atlanta Zoo (U.S.), San Diego Zoo (U.S.), Tokyo Zoo (Japan), Vienna Zoo (Austria), Chiang Mai (Thailand) and soon Adelaide Zoo (Australia).

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