

Taronga Zoo hosts British Consul General for COP26 Nature Day

At the zoo, she met with conservation experts who demonstrated how the team is protecting iconic Australian species.

The British Consul General met with Taronga's Divisional Director, Welfare Conservation and Science, Nick Boyle, and Manager, Conservation Science, Dr Justine O'Brien. The team showed Ms Cantillon the Taronga Institute of Science and Learning and outlined the Zoo's education and conservation programmes. She saw first hand their Greater Bilby breed and release programme Taronga, along with its partners, has reintroduced bilbies to the Sturt National Park, 100 years after they went extinct in the area. There are just 9,000 left in the wild and the release at Sturt increased the total bilby population by 17%.

She also heard about Taronga's breed and release programme for the Regent Honeyeater, a critically endangered Australian bird. Only 350 remain in the wild, but in October 58 were released to help bolster the wild population.

British Consul General Louise Cantillon said:

As the focus of COP26 moves towards the role of nature and adaptation it's great to see the work of the Taronga here in Sydney, and by extension their team in Dubbo. Their impressive work to breed and release native animals such as the bilby and the Plains-wanderer and their conservation research puts nature first.

Nature underpins human health, wellbeing and prosperity and we need to ensure countries, business and individual's value and defend these assets. Protecting and restoring nature must be part of the pathway to net zero which is why the UK is encouraging countries to include nature-based solutions in their climate plans.

Taronga Zoo Sydney's Divisional Director for Welfare Conservation and Science, Nick Boyle, said:

Taronga works with many partners across the world to tackle pressing conservation challenges and it is a privilege to be able to share our work with the British Deputy Consul today.

Sadly many iconic Australian species, including koalas and Taronga's emblem, the platypus, are facing increased challenges as a result of climate change.

The UN Climate Conference is an opportunity for us all to reflect

on how we can make the best choices to protect our planet for future generations and for the incredible wildlife we share it with.

[Taronga Zoo](#) is certified net zero with a commitment to net zero by 2030, removing single use plastic, moving to renewable energy and reducing emissions. Their education work aims to support visitors and school groups to understand how they can take action to reduce their impact on the environment: from clearing litter from rivers, plastics reduction, protecting the Australian bush and iconic Australian ecosystems.

[COP26](#) in Glasgow has brought together world leaders, governments, civil society and businesses to focus on how we can limit climate change, keep warming to 1.5 degrees and create a cleaner world. The Summit will work to accelerate action on protecting and restoring forests and other critical ecosystems and helping the world move towards sustainable agriculture and land use. It will highlight the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Significant progress has already been made at COP26 with more than 120 world leaders committing to end and reverse deforestation by 2030. This was the first major agreement reached at the summit by countries containing 85% of the world's forests, an area of over 13 million square miles. Forests absorb around one third of the global CO2 released from burning fossil fuels every year, but every minute an area of forest the size of 27 football pitches is lost.

To contact the British High Commission for climate related media enquiries, please contact amelia.mcnair@fcdo.gov.uk or 0416 645 857.