

WELLINGTON



Wellington Zoo Trust

Annual Report 2009–10

Chair Report

As this is my first opportunity to write as Chair of Wellington Zoo Trust, it gives me great pleasure to report back on so many positive achievements over the past twelve months.

Our dedication and commitment has been rewarded with a string of regional and national awards to line our cabinet. Standout achievements included taking home the Green Gold Award at the Wellington Gold Awards and The Nest – Te Kōhanga beating a host of larger projects to be named Best New Large Exhibit at the Zoo and Aquarium Association regional conference.

However, perhaps the crowning moment of this year's awards season was the Zoo winning the coveted People's Choice Award at the NZI National Sustainable Business Network Awards, after we were named Sustainable Business of the Year in our regional area.

Sustainability is such a large part of what the Zoo stands for these days, so it is highly rewarding to be recognised by our peers and the community in this respect.

Awards look great on the shelf, but the fact that they are each symbolic of the hard work of our Zoo Team and our supporters that really gives them their value.

At the forefront of this successful team have been Karen Fifield and the Strategic Management Team. Karen received well deserved recognition at the HER Businesswoman of the Year Awards, walking away with three prestigious awards.

Our Trustees have again made a real difference with their continued hard work on the Zoo's behalf. This year it has been great to welcome two new Trustees to the team in Shaan Stevens and Alan Dixon and sad to say farewell to Denise Church and Phillip Meyer. All of their hard work has been appreciated by all of us.

We would not have been able to achieve any of the successes that fill this Annual Report without the continued backing and generosity of our supporters.

As ever, we are indebted to our principal funder Wellington City Council. The dedication of Councillors and staff led by Mayor Kerry Prendergast towards the Zoo has again been second to none. Countless other acts of generosity from all the trusts, foundations, sponsors, partners, businesses and individuals have made valuable contributions towards our daily work and capital projects.

Achieving our dream of making Wellington Zoo 'the best little Zoo in the world' will only happen with everyone working together as a team. We have certainly reaped the rewards of this approach over the last twelve months. Long may it continue!

Chief Executive Report

This year has been one of reward and recognition for our Zoo as we strive to ensure Wellington has a Zoo to be proud of and one that is in good health across all facets of the business.

This year our six strategic elements – visitor engagement, financial sustainability, valuing staff, community support, conservation outcomes and industry leadership – continued to provide focus and clarity to deliver our vision. Of our 20 targets set against these elements, 15 were met or exceeded. Most importantly we had a 3% increase on visitation this year, with 183,286 people visiting the Zoo. The Zoo generated 47% of its operational costs this year and finished with a positive financial result of \$18,000.

The Nest – Te Kōhanga, our new award-winning animal hospital and the most ambitious project in the history of the Zoo, opened in December 2009. In addition to the care of the animals at the Zoo, this amazing state-of-the-art facility has treated over 90 native animal cases brought to us from the community, the SPCA, Zealandia, bird rehabilitators and the Department of Conservation. The operation on 28 year-old Cara the chimp's chronic ear infection was a world first primate surgery. Our Veterinary Resident Programme with Massey University has been extremely successful in building wildlife and zoo veterinary capability for New Zealand. The African Village was also opened this year, marking the completion of our African Unity project.

We have now entered year five of our ten year Zoo Capital Plan with the start of construction for The Hub – a place of rest, relaxation and fun in the centre of the Zoo and The Roost, the new bird breeding and care facility.

We welcomed the arrival of a red panda cub on Christmas Eve and also two additions to our baboon troop this year. Three nyala arrived from South Africa – the first in New Zealand – and we said farewell to our father and son chimps, Boyd and Gombe, as they moved to Monarto Zoo to be part of a new chimpanzee troop there.

Conservation is at the heart of everything we do, and our partnerships in this respect have taken our results to new levels this year. Places for Penguins, in partnership with Forest and Bird, and the establishment of the Wellington Zoo Conservation Fellowship with support from the Holdsworth Charitable Trust have enabled us to extend our field conservation work.

The Zoo belongs to the community and we now have 3,343 Zoo Crew members who visit the Zoo regularly. We had a record number of 3,227 visitors on Children's Day and a fabulous Neighbour's Night BBQ this year.

As always, I am extremely proud of our Zoo Team and what they have achieved this year. We were placed in the top 25% of all New Zealand organisations that entered the JRA Best Places to Work Survey this year and this shows that our people are proud of the Zoo and the work we do.

The revitalisation of Wellington Zoo is continuing in fine form and I thank everyone who has contributed to the creation of our 'best little Zoo in the world'.

Strategic Direction

As we end our seventh year as a charitable trust, our dream remains the same: to become the best little Zoo in the world. A magical place of learning and fun. Our visitors should feel a sense of wonder and respect for nature, as well a belief in the need for a sustainable co-existence between wildlife and people.

Our primary purpose also remains the same as it ever was: to bring animals and people who visit, be it on site or online, together. Individuals, families and other groups can experience a special connection with the beauty of the natural world here at the Zoo, and take away an understanding of how they can play their part in securing a sustainable future for our world.

Our visitors are able to do all this in an environment where they know highest standards of animal care, learning, conservation, creativity, partnerships and fun are kept every day. These commitments are what Wellington Zoo Trust has been built on over the past seven years; the following is an overview of how we have moved forward over the last 12 months organised into our six key elements.

1. Deliver outstanding, intimate and unique visitor experience

- Enhanced contact animal programme
- Implementing ZCP projects: African Village, The Nest Te Kōhanga
- Excellence in Learning programme
- Delivering conservation and sustainability messages to our visitors

2. Industry leadership

- Demonstrating expertise in business leadership, wildlife care, animal management, conservation, sustainability and learning.
- Representation on industry committees and through our support of national and international breeding and conservation programmes.

3. Financial Sustainability

- Maintaining the support of the Wellington City Council and other partners
- Increasing revenue gained through visitor spend and commercial opportunities
- Maximising fundraising activity

4. Valued and motivated staff

- Enhancing our learning culture, for example learning lunches, conferences, workshops
- Making the most of people's passion and skills
- Rewarding and recognising our people

5. Lead or participate in conservation and research programmes

- Working in collaboration with agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Landcare Research for conservation outcomes for New Zealand and other parts of the planet.
- Making significant advances to reduce our environmental footprint
- Integrating conservation with animal management and our visitors' experience

6. Lasting support and participation

- Growing the Volunteer programme, including corporate volunteers
- Building strategic partnerships
- Engaging with our community and giving them opportunities to join us on our journey

Leadership

Throughout its 104-year history, people have looked to Wellington Zoo as an authority on animal care matters in New Zealand. Now increasingly we are recognised as a benchmark organisation for conservation and sustainability work, visitor engagement, people and culture and how to be a successful not-for-profit business with an important cause.

Sustainability is a key word here at the Zoo. It is something that is central to our thinking when any new exhibits are planned, so naturally it was a central part of the creation of The Nest – Te Kōhanga.

By building this amazing new animal hospital we knew that we were creating a first for the Wellington region, which had never before had access to a centre for native animal care. But in addition to its purpose, we also wanted to ensure that the fabric of the building was forward-thinking in its design, incorporating recycled elements and green energy as well as being an innovative visitor experience. This approach has been a touchstone in the many sustainability awards the Zoo has won this year.

Industry recognition

The work of The Nest – Te Kōhanga was a key reason behind the Zoo winning the Green Gold Award at the Wellington Gold Awards – awards that celebrate the best business performers in the region. The state-of-the-art facility was also named Best New Large Exhibit by the Zoo and Aquarium Association, one of the most respected and influential voices for wildlife conservation in Australasia. The fact that The Nest – Te Kōhanga competed successfully in this category against attractions built with far greater price tags made this win even more satisfying.

The wider sustainability work at the Zoo was recognised when it was named the supreme award winner of the Sustainable Business of the Year and winner in the Not-for-Profit category at the

Sustainable Business Network Central/Southern Regional Awards. This outstanding performance gave the Zoo the opportunity to compete at the organisation's national awards, where we received a judge's commendation in the National Trailblazer Not-for-Profit category and won the coveted National People's Choice Award. This latter accolade perhaps provides the greatest indication of our emerging position as an industry leader in sustainability.

In Karen Fifield the Zoo has a Chief Executive that certainly leads from the front. Her dedication and passion to make the business sustainable, in both an environmental and fiscal sense, has been rightly recognised by her peers this year. At the first ever HER Businesswoman of the Year Awards for the Wellington region she was named winner in both the Outstanding Corporate Leadership and Sustainability categories. She followed this up by winning the Outstanding Business Leader category at the national NZ Bloom HER Businesswoman of the Year Awards. Three and a half years into her role here, these awards show that Karen has lost none of her enthusiasm and drive for her work.

Industry leading

Elsewhere in the organisation we are also blessed with people who are making their mark in the zoo industry. Away from her duties here at the Zoo, Chief Executive Karen Fifield sits as Vice President of the Zoo Industry Board. Vimal Patel (Primate Keeper) and Simon Eyre (Collections Development Coordinator) have been appointed species coordinators for pygmy marmosets in Australia and New Zealand. Their role is to collate information and make recommendations on optimal pairings to be used in all breeding programmes in the region. These new roles add to the similar work we already conduct for tuatara (Barbara Blanchard, Animal Registrar and Librarian), African crested porcupine (Simon Eyre), meerkat (Simon Eyre) and nyala (Elise Kovac, Team Leader Herbivores, Birds and Reptiles, with assistance from Simon Eyre) species – the findings of which hold international significance.

We have continued to work closely with the Zoo and Aquarium Association. Beth Houston, Group Manager Commercial Development, is now Australasian convener for the Marketing Specialist Advisory Group of the ZAA, while Edy MacDonald, Manager Conservation is co-convenor of the newly created ZAA Sustainability Specialist Advisory Group. Simon Eyre also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to assist the work of both the ZAA Australasian Species Management Programme and the ZAA Accreditation Committee.

We are also keen to take opportunities to share our experience with others in the zoo industry. This year we sent five staff members to the Zoo and Aquarium Association conference held in Healesville, Melbourne to present papers on The Nest – Te Kōhanga (Karen Fifield), nyala importation (Simon Eyre), perception of local and global conservation threats and actions, our possum partnership with Victoria University, conservation messaging uptake research (Edy MacDonald) and sustainability

strategies (Beth Houston and Shane Whittaker, Manager Property).

We also fielded six speakers at the New Zealand Conservation Management Group annual conference in Hamilton, which is the recognised organisation and coordinating body for the native capture industry. The papers presented here were on collection planning and species management (Simon Eyre), The Nest – Te Kōhanga (Oliver de Bern, Team Leader Visitor Experience), our Bush Builders programme (Caroline Colgan, Team Leader Learning), securing a grand and Otago skink ex-situ population (Olivia Whalley, Reptile Keeper) and the Zoo's North Island kaka breed and release programme (Phil Wisker, Bird Keeper).

Attendance and interaction, as well as adding our voice, at these events is invaluable in terms of informing our work back at the Zoo. Above all else, we want our work as an international industry leader to directly influence and enhance the lives of our animals here at the Zoo. One of the most visible sign that we are continuing to move forward is the performance of our breeding programmes.

Home-grown success

Some of the more notable successes have been the birth of an Otago skink at our Scaly Nursery. Not only is this a firm indication that we can hold and breed native reptiles on-site, the arrival will also enrich the genetic viability of New Zealand's captive skink population. We currently hold an insurance population of the skinks, separate to our exhibit collection, as one of our conservation projects in partnership with the Department of Conservation. The birth represents a significant breakthrough in this regard.

We also discovered what we believe to be the first find of fertile tuatara eggs at the Zoo for over 20 years. This has been heralded by our resident expert and species coordinator Barbara Blanchard as a highly significant breakthrough for the Zoo's breeding programme and the species in New Zealand.

Our veterinary team were also able to use the state-of-the-art facilities at The Nest – Te Kōhanga to perform groundbreaking work to help 28 year-old Cara the chimpanzee with her chronic ear infection. In what was a world-first primate surgery operation, the Zoo enlisted the expertise of human ear, nose and throat surgeon Dr Rebecca Garland and specialist veterinary surgeon Dr Andrew Worth from Massey University to lead the procedure on the day. It was a risky but necessary procedure for the team, but Cara has responded well to the surgery and is now visibly more confident within the troop. A great result all round. We would like to acknowledge the help of these specialists. We simply can't do our work without the help of our supporters.

Conservation

Conservation is at the heart of everything we do here at the Zoo. It is a big part of what being a 21st century zoo is all about. Through our work we have a unique perspective of how our actions have an impact on the wider world, and we are keen to share that with our visitors and stakeholders.

The projects we support and participate in are a key part of getting our conservation messages across, complementing the information placed around the Zoo and communicated through our daily talks. It is also a great opportunity to work with other partners that share our goals and vision.

Partnerships in practice

Our involvement in Places for Penguins this year was a great example of this approach in action. The project is a Forest & Bird initiative to help little blue penguins survive and thrive around the shoreline of Wellington, where the species face issues of natural habitat loss, marine pollution and introduced pests on a daily basis. Our role in the work this year has focussed on constructing over 150 nest boxes and placing and monitoring the units at Moa Point and other coastal locales. Our Zoo Crew members have played a big part in helping us in the building phase, and members of staff have been happy to volunteer in all weathers to make sure they are placed correctly in the wild.

Places for Penguins will offer little blue penguin refuge in the nest boxes throughout their breeding season, and make a real difference to their future in the Wellington region. We have already discovered evidence of breeding pairs using the nest boxes; we hope to see much more of this in the upcoming months.

We also worked in partnership with Forest & Bird, as well as the Department of Conservation and WWF, on International Year of Biodiversity celebrations hosted at the Zoo. It was a great opportunity for families to come and learn more about environmental issues as part of a fun day out. Coupled with our Conservation Day, environmental matters have certainly been given a higher profile at the Zoo this year.

Spreading the word

One of the Zoo's featured campaigns is to encourage visitors to keep cats in at night. New Zealand has the highest rate of cat ownership per capita in the world, with 51% of homes having at least one cat. These felines are responsible for the deaths of an estimated 16–24 million animals a year, many of which are native species. By putting messages in our talks and encouraging visitors to write pledges to display in our Wild Theatre, we hope we can empower people to make one small lifestyle change to help address a serious national issue.

Changing visitors' approach to getting to the Zoo was the focus of our green bus promotion this year, developed in partnership with Go Wellington. A total of 1,171 people jumped on public transport over a two month period. Not only did their actions provide them with half-price Zoo entry for the day, they also saved enough carbon that would require the equivalent of a rugby pitch-sized area of trees to offset, simply by leaving the car at home for the day.

Funding change

As well as changing mindsets, money will always be a necessary part of any effort to drive environmental change. Our Conservation Steering Group has been working hard looking at innovative ways to raise capital for our Zoo Conservation Fund. Revenue from Close Encounter sales continues to make the biggest contribution, with 10% fed directly to the fund accounting for approximately \$12,500 during 2009–10. Wellington's love of cinema was also successfully tapped into this year with the first ever Film Night Conservation Fundraiser held at the local Penthouse Cinema in Brooklyn. The screening of acclaimed nature documentary *Milking the Rhino* attracted a packed house full of film and animal lovers, and raised over \$2,000 for the Fund.

Together with the Holdsworth Charitable Trust, the money raised at events like this has enabled the Zoo to launch its own Conservation Fellowship. We invited individuals and organisations to apply for funding for projects (for up to three years at a maximum of \$12,000 per annum) that fulfil the criteria of protecting New Zealand's unique flora and fauna and in which members of Zoo staff can participate in the field. The first two projects to be awarded the Wellington Zoo Conservation Fellowship are a nest monitoring and tracking Kea Conservation Trust project to radio and satellite-tag kea in the Nelson Lakes and Arthur's Pass region, and a Victoria University project to evaluate the success of community restoration through tree planting in Wellington. Both are worthy causes that the Zoo is happy to support.

Conservation is a part of the fabric of life here at the Zoo, whether it is in the percentage of sustainable building material used to build The Nest – Te Kōhanga and our African Village or our staff making environmental pledges and volunteering for tree planting on Arbor Day. We understand that many perceivably small changes can have a big effect, which is why we won't stop trying to make a difference every day.

Animal Collection

Our animals are what make Wellington Zoo unique. They are the reason we all come into work each morning and try harder each day to make this organisation better. It is a deep connection, reaffirmed and strengthened each year. These last 12 months have been no different, offering the same ups and downs as ever.

New arrivals

One of the greatest highlights is when we can bring new life into the Zoo through our breeding programmes. The birth of a new red panda cub on Christmas Eve was the second time Amy and Ishah had successfully bred, providing Sir Ed (named after Sir Edmund Hillary) a new sibling. The cub, known affectionately as Pipsqueak until it was discovered to be male and then named Manasa, has developed well and is now exploring his enclosure independent of mother Amy.

There have also been new little additions to the baboon troop, with the arrival of two boys Tutankhamun and Anubis. Although there was some wariness about possible conflict over the rightful parentage of Anubis, we are pleased to report that both have developed successfully. The addition of the babies has reinforced the stability of the group, creating a new dynamic and encouraging a new set of bonding behaviours.

Valuable imports

As well as births, there have also been some significant introductions over the last year. After the sad passing of Chomel the sun bear in September 2009, we were concerned that her daughter Sasa's development may be impaired by the separation and isolation of being without her mother in the enclosure. We made the decision to introduce her to her father Sean. Despite a few early teething issues, the pair is now well integrated and visitors can see them playing happily together most afternoons.

In terms of introductions for breeding purposes, we formed a new pair of small clawed otters and a group of spider monkeys. In terms of the latter, after some initial volatile behaviour from alpha male Jackie Chan the group has settled down into a solid, stable unit.

Introductions within our two tamarin groups were all successful. The process of adding a new female emperor tamarin was relatively straightforward, but introducing one female cotton top tamarin to a group of males was a relatively untested approach within the industry. In the near future our Primate Keepers will collate their records and publish a paper to share their findings and experiences from this process.

Our African Savannah has been enhanced by the arrival of three nyala antelope from South Africa: one male and two female. Two of our staff, Mauritz Basson (General Manager Operations) and Elise Kovac went to Rietkuil, Johannesburg Zoo's farm in the Free State, to ensure their transfer and arrival was conducted safely. After a cautious introduction in a slow-paced and controlled environment – to prepare them to different sounds and visitors – all three have settled in well with our giraffe, ostrich, blackbuck and guinea fowl. The nyala will form part of a regional zoo breeding programme, so we hope to be able to see many more examples of this beautiful species at the Zoo in the coming years.

Fond farewells

As well as arrivals, there have also been some departures within our primate collection. Two of our chimpanzees, father Boyd and son Gombe, moved to Monarto Zoo in South Australia. The reduction of the Zoo's troupe to 11 chimpanzees has had a positive effect, settling the group down and creating a more favourable male to female ratio. Boyd and Gombe were gladly met by a familiar face in their new home: former Wellington Zoo Primate Keeper Cassandra Butler is now Senior Keeper at Monarto Zoo. They have both settled in well to their new environment.

Visitor Engagement

We want everyone to go home after their visit to the Zoo feeling like they had an outstanding, intimate and unique experience. Every time, without fail. These are high standards to measure ourselves by, but we know this is what people have come to expect of us and we have no intention of offering anything less.

Satisfying our visitors

This year 183,286 people came through our gates with those expectations, 99.54% of our targeted visitation but 3% more than the total for the last financial year. That's a lot of people to satisfy, but the most recent Wellington City Council Resident's Satisfaction Survey suggests we are doing good job of it: 93% of visitors over the last year rated their experience as good or very good. That's a 6% improvement on last year and a fantastic achievement.

Visitor interaction is a big part of this success. This relationship begins at the first point visitors arrive at the Zoo, where visitors often have the opportunity to meet a guide with a contact animal near the front counter. Over the last 12 months we have clocked over 1,000 contact hours with visitors, with 660 hours handled by our Visitor Engagement Team alone.

One of the biggest new focal points for this interaction with visitors is both inside and outside The Nest – Te Kōhanga. Our Veterinary Team have responded fantastically well to the challenge of conducting their work in this new 'goldfish bowl' environment. The daily procedures now offer another fantastic opportunity to engage with our visitors and bring conservation to life. Outside, our Visitor Engagement Team perform effective interpretation of The Nest – Te Kōhanga in the daily 'Become a vet in 5 minutes' presentation. It allows visitors to participate in a simple check up of one of our contact animals and help us decide whether to operate or medicate.

Daily inspiration

The Living Room continues to be the dedicated home of formal learning at the Zoo. Last year 10,358 students came through its doors on the Ministry of Education's Learning Experiences Outside the

Classroom (LEOTC) programme, with a further 895 children visiting as part of our school holiday programme. That's a lot of impressionable young minds to engage with, but our team seemed to hit the right chord with the teachers as 97% of them rated the sessions as having met or exceeded their learning objectives. Bush Builders continued to be a big hit with youngsters, with 411 new students taking part from local schools across Wellington. This success has led to the project receiving funding for a further 12 months.

For the majority of our visitors it is engagement with our animals and our staff that form the basis of their experience. Our Programmes Team have been hard at work developing improvements to their talks and presentations. We have added a contact tuatara to our Tahi the kiwi presentation, giving visitors the opportunity to see this fascinating native up close. Our Amazing Animals presentation has also seen some additions with the introduction of Noosa the red-tailed black cockatoo, Mati the kea and Biff the possum.

We also use these presentations as opportunities to highlight the reasons behind our 'keep your cats in at night' campaign by working this key message into both presentations, as well as lining the walls of the Wild Theatre with visitor conservation pledges.

Maintaining the right profile

Because we want every visit here to be a special, regardless of how often visitors frequent us, constant renewal of the Zoo is a primary concern. We have installed new interpretative signs at the Chimpanzee House telling the story of a day in the life of its residents, and showcasing Jessie the chimp's artistic talents. To inform our visitors about timeframes for the exciting developments taking shape across the Zoo we also introduced the Future Zoo signs installed at the front entrance. This installation was complemented by signage around the Zoo to keep our visitors up to date on our development plans for the Zoo and what they will see at certain points around the Zoo in the future.

Building our 21st Century Zoo

We are now entering year five of the Zoo's exciting ten year Zoo Capital Programme (ZCP). It promises to create a truly 21st century zoo, to capture the imagination of our visitors and to ensure we have the staff and exhibit facilities we need to continue delivering first class care to our animals. We have made great strides over the last 12 months.

Significant steps

The most obvious starting point is the opening of The Nest – Te Kōhanga animal hospital and centre for native wildlife care. The \$6million complex is not only the largest project of our current ZCP, it is also the most ambitious and far-reaching addition to the Zoo in its 104 year history. Its opening in December 2009 represented a real achievement for the team and a great step forward for the

Wellington veterinary industry, which now has a centre for dedicated to native species for the first time.

Some of the residents from our Zoo collection have also been excitedly getting used to some new enclosures too. The smaller contact animals from The Living Room, our centre for formal learning at the Zoo, have been treated to fresh new refurbished surroundings. Our scene-stealing pygmy marmosets have been distracting happy customers at our new Mojo Café, as they have taken over the old meerkat enclosure that adjoins the dining area. This space represents an old explorers' hut, providing Macchu and Picchu with the indoor and outdoor flow they need to prosper. Most recently we invited our Zoo Crew, Big Bite members and Monthly Givers to help us open our fantastic new meerkat and porcupine enclosure, bringing the two African species together for the first time.

Putting visitors first

The human element of our Zoo has not been forgotten, as we have continued to make important developments to help enhance visitor engagement. As well as ensuring a warm welcome with vibrant new signage and photography, we also added a new parent's room to the front of the Zoo – providing a bright space for changing and feeding some of our smallest visitors. We have performed some enhancements at our Archibald Centre, including adding new carpet and signage, installing new toilet facilities and a full interior repaint. As one of our key function venues this space provides the Zoo with a valuable revenue stream, hosting a range of corporate events, sleepover groups and our school holiday programme.

One of the Zoo's newest venue spaces is our African Village, officially opened in November by Wellington Mayor Kerry Prendergast and Anne Manchester (executor of The Estate of Colin Webster-Watson, the donor behind the project). The opening of this development marks the completion of our African Unity project, another part of the ZCP. The project was to create a cohesive and contextual visitor engagement around our African animals.

Looking ahead

This year we also finalised future plans for more exciting projects over the coming years as a continuation of our ZCP. The first two major developments planned for completion are The Roost (late-2010), our on-display bird breeding and care facility, and The Hub (early-2011), a new function and relaxation space in the heart of the Zoo. We will also complete work on our lion's den before the close of the year, allowing us to welcome back our lions from Christchurch's Orana Wildlife Park and potentially breed them with our lionesses. In mid-2011 we will begin work on our Asia precinct, including a new enclosure for our sun bears and improved visitor viewing at our existing tiger enclosure.

Community Matters

Without the support of our community there simply would be no Zoo. So we like to give back as often as possible. Whether we do this in obvious or more subtle ways, the outcome of strengthening ties at every level of our community is always our aim.

High profile events

One of the most high profile community events was our annual National Children's Day celebrations on Sunday 7 March, which attracted record numbers of families. And a few queues around the block, which is always nice to see on a sunny Wellington day. Every child got in for just \$1: a really nice way to attract people into the Zoo. On the day we welcomed 3,227 visitors through our gates; almost double the attendance of the previous year.

Back in January we also held a Neighbours' BBQ to invite residents of the surrounding streets in Newtown for a free visit to enjoy a sizzling sausage or two – it's the least we could do given our gibbon's habit of singing every morning. This event also beat last year's attendance figure by 100 (781 attendees). We got great feedback from our first ever appearance at the Newtown Festival. As well as fundraising at the Festival, this was another opportunity to connect with the people who live on our doorstep.

The Nest Unwrapped was another big day at the Zoo in January. As well as special behind the scenes tours of the new hospital, there was also the opportunity for youngsters to bring their favourite soft animal toy in for a vet check-up.

Working for our community

It's fantastic to be able to welcome so many people into the Zoo, but we are also pleased to have made a difference to individuals in the community too.

Community Max is a programme offered by the Ministry of Social Development to help young people build skills and work experience by providing a wage subsidy to help them complete community-based projects. We have been happy to have helped three people on the programme this year. One placement had an opportunity to work on IT projects at the Zoo, including the creation of ZooNet – the Zoo's first intranet system. Another helped us by completing market research on conservation messages retention in visitors through our talks. The final placement played a part in helping build our fantastic new porcupine and meerkat enclosure, and has now begun a full-time apprenticeship at the Zoo. It is great to be able to play such an active role in giving these young people a start in working life.

As well as young people coming into the job market, we are also active in helping people who are new to our shores find new skills. Working in partnership with Victoria University and The Johnson Group on its Skilled Migrants' Programme, we welcomed an intern into our team for a six week placement to help him put into practice the communications skills he had learnt during his VUW training.

Volunteering is also a big part of how our community interacts with the Zoo. As a result of a review in March, the work of our 54 individual volunteers has been better integrated across the organisation in areas like Finance, Learning and Commercial Development. We have also taken on two Gateway students to assist at all major Zoo events. These people have become a huge asset to the Zoo, combining to offer 103,633 hours of unpaid service. They are all truly remarkable individuals.

Branching out into the Wellington business community, we have welcomed 40 corporate volunteer groups over the last year. These include major names like ANZ, National and Kiwibank to other not-for-profit organisations like Rotary, YHA and Capability NZ. We were also proud to be a venue in BNZ's Closed for Good, when all of the bank's branches closed for a day so that its staff could take part in community projects.

Commercial Development

We view Wellington Zoo as a not-for-loss organisation. In this sense the work of our Commercial Development team plays a vital role in achieving the right outcome when it comes to our bottom line. By capitalising on a number of different revenue streams and enterprising initiatives we were able to successfully meet our commercial products target with a month to spare.

One of our key commercial products is our Zoo Crew membership, with patronage ranging from the very young to parents and grandparents. This continued support is a vital resource for the Zoo, and we were pleased to exceed our target for membership with a total of 3,343 individual members.

As well as seeking interaction with this group of visitors, we have also been keen to branch out to develop relationships with a range of new commercial partners. To strengthen our ties with key players in the tourism and conservation fields we signed memorandums of understanding with Positively Wellington Tourism, the SPCA and Zealandia – the latter two agreements were signed in direct relation to activity surrounding The Nest – Te Kōhanga. The Zoo also linked up with one of Wellington's most loved brands when it welcomed Mojo Coffee to run our café and tuck shop operations in March. Over the next financial year they will give the café space a refit: bringing it in line with the successful look and feel of its other branches with a Zoo twist. In addition to Mojo Coffee, we have also worked on creating a list of other preferred caterers – including Mojo, Baxter's, Smith the Grocer, Attitude for Food and Ruth Pretty, for use for on-site functions. As a charitable trust itself,

Wellington Zoo can't support every charity that asks for help. We do what we can and support Ronald McDonald House, the Wellington Hospital and Health Foundation.

Promoting our brand

In addition to some fantastic individual successes in terms of events like Children's Day and *Unwrap the Nest*, we have also introduced a range of promotions to increase visitor numbers throughout the year. To avoid saturating the marketplace with discount offers, which could have the potential to devalue our brand, we have specifically targeted our campaigns to attract different groups of potential visitors.

Discount promotions included our Half Price Fridays offer in March, which helped the Zoo exceed its monthly total by 4,876 visitors. Our Zoomerang promotion was an innovative way to encourage repeat visitation, by offering 25% off entry vouchers to be redeemed within a fixed period. A 'Thank you Wellington' promotion day repaid the loyalty of our local supporters by allowing free child Zoo entry for visitors from the Greater Wellington area.

More specialised promotions targeted our Zoo Crew and Big Bite members, which allowed them to bring a friend to the Zoo free in June. This promotion was conceived after research carried out by Ben Parsons & Associates identified that our Zoo Crew membership would be enhanced with the inclusion of a free pass allocation scheme. Our amazing 54 volunteers were also able to take part in this promotion and offer their friends a half price trip to the Zoo. To raise our profile and make the most of cross-promotional opportunities associated with our new Mojo Coffee partnership, we now offer a Zoo discount for all Mojo Card holders.

Raising our profile

The media has again played a key part in keeping the Zoo in the community consciousness. We have consistently attracted attention on a local and national level for a wide range of business, human interest and conservation Zoo stories – including fantastic coverage for *The Nest – Te Kōhanga* opening and specific veterinary cases conducted there. The second series of the highly popular *Wild Vets* documentary series was also filmed on site over the summer months. The Zoo was featured in all ten episodes screened on TV1, and the production company is now in talks to distribute the programme across the world.

In addition to the traditional media channels, the Zoo made greater inroads into the world of social media. Our Twitter and Facebook fan page both have over 1,000 members, each receiving daily news updates and promotional information in real time. It is an interesting and effective way to further interact with our visitors and keep them in touch with everything they need to know about the best little Zoo in the world.

People Power

Our Zoo is built around a group of people passionate about creating a truly sustainable environment for our animals to live and thrive in. Some are more directly hands on than others, but everyone has their role to play and is pushing in the same direction. A really unified team effort.

We are fortunate to have four Ambassadors working on behalf of our Zoo in the wider community: Jane Diplock, Cameron Harland, The Umaga Family, and newest member Merrilyn O’Sullivan. The latter brings wide experience from her work as a public sector health and social policy specialist, gathered from previous posts with the World Health Organisation in Geneva and the World Bank in Washington DC. In New Zealand, Merrilyn chairs the Diplomatic Ball Committee and is a member of the Diplomatic Heads of Mission Spouses Group. Alongside the continued support of Jane, Cameron, Tana and Rochelle, and Merrilyn we are confident that our Zoo has a committed and passionate to represent our work beyond the Zoo gates.

Streamlining our business

Within the Zoo we have been working hard to improve our working environment too. The most wide-scale projects have been a comprehensive review of our overall working structure to ensure it remains fit for purpose. There were a number of reasons for this action, including an increased focus on visitor engagement to attract customers, challenging financial targets and the opening of The Nest – Te Kōhanga.

After an extensive consultation period it was decided to realign some teams and create five new roles: Group Manager Visitor Engagement, Team Leader Visitor Programmes, Team Leader Visitor Experience and Functions and Tourism Advisor. These positions have now all been filled and are in progress.

This year, we also took the opportunity to reflect and review the structure of our Life Science teams before beginning any recruitment for a few vacant positions. The outcome was to realign the team structure under three Team Leader positions: Team Leader Herbivores, Birds and Reptiles, Team Leader Carnivores and Primates, and Team Leader Programmes and Projects.

As well as streamlining current teams The Zoo has also been branching out in the last year to add new positions: namely Database and Administration Advisor and Finance Assistant. These new team members have each been responsible for supporting areas of our business, enabling us to enhance and expand the scope of our business.

Innovative thinking

Our goal to be recognised as a truly 21st century zoo took another step forward this year with the introduction of the international Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) online records system. This comprehensive database will replace and collate existing digital animal records, including medical and studbook programs, providing all staff members access to detailed real time animal and enclosure information from across the zoo world.

Growing and developing our staff was also the reason behind the 20 learning lunch sessions held this year, covering topics like the history of the Zoo and Wellington's Taputeranga marine reserve to the best commercial uses for new social media tools like Twitter and Facebook.

Staff involved with visitor interaction also received external training from industry experts on how to prepare and develop relevant and interesting animal talks and presentations. The two day POWER and Hook, Line and Sinker workshops were hosted by Scott Killeen, General Manager Visitor Experience at Melbourne Zoo, and John Pastorelli, Lead Consultant at Ochre Learning. The sessions provided invaluable objective analysis and enhanced our ability to help our visitors learn and take away important messages about our work. These sessions can now be delivered by Zoo staff, to ensure consistent training of all Zoo staff.

We are proud of the working environment we have created at the Zoo and the central role that people development plays within it. This is why the results of our performance in our first ever JRA Best Places to Work survey were so rewarding. The Zoo was placed in the top 25% of all New Zealand organisations that entered. Although this is a fantastic result, we are keen to use the feedback to continue to make improvements.

One of the areas we will be looking at is reward and recognition. Early work on this included the first ever Aoraki Awards to recognise outstanding contributions from staff and long standing service. It was amazing to take time to reflect on the work of staff like Barbara Blanchard (30 years service) and Murray Roberts (44 years service), who have both given most of their working lives to the Zoo. A truly remarkable achievement.

Financial sustainability and success

Since becoming a charitable trust in 2003, Wellington Zoo has continually measured its overall performance against exacting financial targets. In the long-term this is the only way we will be able to achieve our goal of reducing our dependence on operational funding provided by Wellington City Council.

This year we made further inroads into the completion of this journey. In the face of a challenging economic climate the Zoo exceeded 20 out of 23 of our key performance measures, including

exceeding our commercial development target. The table below provides a breakdown of key earnings for the financial year.

Visitor admissions	\$1,483,000
Commercial product sales	\$411,000
Fundraising for capital projects	\$330,000
Zoo shop retail sales	\$233,000
Operational sponsorship and grants	\$172,000

In addition to these returns, and despite an incredible run of 97 bad weather days, we also achieved 99.54% of our target for visitor numbers.

Value for money in terms of our visitor offer was placed under the spotlight this year in the form of a pricing review across a range of our commercial products. In-depth research was conducted by Ben Parsons & Associates on price and sensitivity towards increases on general admission, Zoo Crew membership, Close Encounters, Sleepovers and our Holiday Programme. We listened to our customers and the result of this process was a small increase in some products – ranging from \$2 (general adult admission) to \$10 (Encounters). We decided to keep our child admission price the same. We are confident that the changes still represent excellent value for our visitors going into next year.

Friends lending a hand

The Zoo would not be the place it is today without our donors and supporters, which help us each year with funding for everything from large scale developments and enclosures to sponsorship of individual animal species. This year we are delighted to welcome ASB and Trade Me to our partnership family. We would like to list and thank the following partners for their generosity this year:

ASB	Pub Charity
Arataki Honey	Radio Network
The Dominion Post	Southern Trust
Fonterra (Tip Top Brands Ltd)	Stout Trust
The Holdsworth Charitable Trust	T G McCarthy Trust
Koala Trust	Trust Charitable Foundation
Lion Foundation	Victoria University
Lottery Grants Board	Zoo Aquarium Association
Ministry of Social Development	
Craig Shepherd & Julie Sammut	

We are fortunate enough to also benefit from countless in-kind donations over the year. Some large, some small: all valued immensely. The organisations and individuals are far too numerous to mention here, but the following are just some examples of the kindness we receive:

- Pacific Radiology has provided invaluable support to our veterinary team, including provision of a wide range of diagnostic services including x-rays, MRI and CT scans
- Saatchi & Saatchi continue to create innovative ideas and campaigns for Zoo promotions and events on a pro bono basis, including the much talked about campaign for The Nest – Te Kōhanga
- Capital & Coast Health Board contributed equipment for use at The Nest – Te Kōhanga
- CDC Pharmaceuticals has donated equipment and consumables for The Nest – Te Kōhanga
- GO Wellington provided a Wellington Zoo bus livery in addition to advertising space to support our Green Bus Promotion initiative
- New Zealand Community Post provided sizeable quantities of community post envelopes
- The Print Room contributes to the production costs for our quarterly ZooViews newsletter
- Southern Cross continue to supply equipment and consumables to support our veterinary team
- Tip Top Bakery continue to provide food supplies for our animals
- Trade Me helped the Zoo launch our own online store on its website
- Weta Workshop used its creative talents to design and craft a climbing sculpture at The Nest – Te Kōhanga

Fundraising plays a vital role in terms of insuring the sustainability of the Zoo. Without the financial support of our visitors and the organisations listed here, bringing the ambitious plans laid out in our ten year Capital Development Plan to fruition would simply not be possible. We ended the financial year \$61,000 ahead of our fundraising target. In order to continue this success our Fundraising Team has introduced a new Monthly Giving programme in order to grow the band of core supporters the Zoo currently benefits from.

The Nest – Te Kōhanga case study

“It was like operating on an ironing board in a broom closet.” The Mayor of Wellington Kerry Prendergast’s honest assessment of cramped working conditions in the Zoo’s previous veterinary hospital.

Something quite clearly had to be done, but few could have imagined the radical changes heralded on Wednesday 9 December 2009 when The Nest – Te Kōhanga animal hospital and centre for native wildlife care was officially opened.

From that day forward the working life of our Veterinary Team would be turned completely inside out and the full scope of their work would be on show daily. Visitors would essentially get to see and experience everything that happened at the new facility.

This was a huge, but exciting, step into the unknown for the Zoo. At any point during any type of animal procedure a member of the team was now expected to engage naturally with visitors. Every movement under observation; every decision open to scrutiny. Intricate daily drama played out through the glare of large glass viewing panes.

Our team have responded amazingly to the challenge. Their technical expertise was never in question, but interaction with visitors in a ‘fish bowl’ environment was always going to be a learning curve. The fact that the team embraced the concept from an early stage has certainly helped ease the transition, which can be put down in no small part to the passion and efforts of Manager Veterinary Science, Dr Katja Geschke. She worked tirelessly to get the project off the ground and it was a great personal moment to have her and her newborn daughter present for the opening.

Throughout each procedure our vets talk visitors through each daily procedure on an adult level, regardless of their age group and the complexity of the individual case. Each animal visits one of our state-of-the-art treatment room or operating theatre for a serious reason, and therefore we make sure the tone always matches the situation. The measured dialogue from our vets through the loud speakers only adds to the intimate atmosphere. Hushed voices rustle along the amphitheatre style seating.

So far visitors have seen cheetah, wild dog and red panda health checks, possums pop out of pillow cases to be tested as part of our ongoing research programme and Cara the chimpanzee undertake world first primate surgery to cure a chronic ear infection. There has rarely been a dull moment.

However, what takes visitor engagement at The Nest – Te Kōhanga to another level is its centre for native wildlife care. The success of this section directly reflects the spirit and generosity of the

organisations and people of Wellington. First they put their hands in their pockets to raise vital funds to help build it, and now they continue to support our work by actively bringing in injured native wildlife to the Zoo. Community engagement in practice.

Because this native section also includes an ozone sterilized salt water pool, also on display to visitors, we can house a greater variety of marine life, including seals and albatross. This facility has never been available in this region of New Zealand before.

Over 90 native cases have been now been treated and rehabilitated by our team, including kaka, tuatara, little blue penguin, kingfisher, morepork and broad billed prion. The standout patient was probably Elizabeth, a windblown northern royal albatross, but each procedure is important in terms of helping New Zealand animal species, improving the skill sets of our vets and raising awareness in our visitors.

This side of the work allows the Zoo to add a new dimension to our conservation work, something that our visitors will never have had the chance to see and engage with this close-up before. It has also strengthens partnerships with other conservation organisations such as Department of Conservation, Zealandia, Forest & Bird, Victoria University and Massey University.

Perhaps most importantly, The Nest – Te Kōhanga is another clear demonstration of the Zoo working successfully with our community. From the outset we saw the project as a wonderful opportunity to launch our first ever community fundraising campaign.

The generous spirit of our many donors – including Pub Charity, Lottery Environment & Heritage, and the New Zealand Community Trust – and hundreds of Wellingtonians really came through to raise our target of \$1.5 million; a quarter of the total cost of the build. And, as principal donor, the importance of continued support from Wellington City Council cannot be overstated.

Without all of their help, The Nest – Te Kōhanga would not be standing in the Zoo today.

Community buy-in was cemented during a moving Iwi Blessing ceremony held the day before the opening ceremony on 8 December 2009 – our thanks again to Sam Jackson, June Jackson and Mark Te One for making this happen.

Like all capital projects at the Zoo, sustainability is rigorously instilled into the very fabric of The Nest - Te Kōhanga building. In addition to recycled concrete making up 70% of the total usage, the complex also features a rain water recovery system, solar water heating (under full sun this could amount to 100% water being heated), sensor lighting throughout and other recycled materials were used wherever possible. All timber used has been approved as sustainable by the Forestry Steward Council.

Any waste produced as a result of The Nest - Te Kōhanga was recycled as far as possible. At least 17 bins of building material was removed from the site and recycled – i.e. none went to landfill. The building is carpeted using Interface Carpet Tiles, which is recognised as a champion of sustainability. The electrical plant for the pool is state of the art power saving pump.

But like most parts of the Zoo, The Nest – Te Kōhanga would be nothing without an element of fun too. That’s exactly what the legendary Weta Workshop injected into proceedings when they created an animal themed climbing frame, where kids can swing about surrounded by interesting facts about their favourite animals. We also have a new talk created by the Zoo’s Visitor Engagement Team entitled ‘Become a vet in five minutes’, which is held at 11.15am daily. The static interpretation has been designed to engage all levels of Zoo visitor – from three year olds who can’t read to those who are interested in the science behind the workings of a zoo hospital.

As well as the fantastic visitor engagement, The Nest - Te Kōhanga is also playing a part in preparing New Zealand’s zoo vets of the future. In partnership with Massey University, the Zoo runs a programme whereby four vets complete their Wildlife and Zoo Medicine residency as part of their masterate course. The Nest - Te Kōhanga also provided one of the principle locations for the second series of the popular TVNZ show Wild Vets. This platform also allowed the Zoo to promote the facility to a wider audience, focusing on both native and Zoo cases over a six month period. As well as these students, The Nest - Te Kōhanga is also provides a home for academic teaching for school students, veterinary nurses, post graduate veterinary and biological sciences students.

From the day it opened, The Nest – Te Kōhanga has engaged, entertained and educated our visitors like never before. Visitor feedback to date in the Zoo’s exit survey is very positive and further research is being undertaken over the next six months for more in depth analysis of the visitor learning outcomes from the multi sensory layered learning at the facility.

One visitor who attended Cara the chimpanzee’s ear operation in June wrote to us that he felt ‘it was a real privilege to be there’. There are not too many visitor experiences that can offer this sort of deep connection with wild animals as part of a fun day out. We are proud to say we now can at The Nest – Te Kōhanga.