

Wellington Zoo 2008/09 Annual Report

Trust Chair Report

Looking back on the 2008/09 year, we celebrate significant steps towards our dream of being the best little Zoo in the world, right here in Wellington.

At the heart of a 21st century zoo is the fusion of conservation mission and connection with people. At Wellington Zoo we are absolutely committed to conservation and to great experiences for our visitors.

In October 2008, we saw this amply illustrated in a packed Wild Theatre, where more than 300 people listened raptly to internationally-renowned primate conservationist Dr Jane Goodall. Jane honoured our own world-class chimpanzee programme in her visit.

We saw 178,386 visitors this year, including 2,718 loyal Zoo Crew members. More than 1000 visitors enjoyed our unique Close Encounters, and thousands more took home unforgettable memories after meeting our dingoes, llamas and lizards on their visit. Trustees know the tremendous amount of work that underpins these experiences.

Our conservation contribution extended further, from successful breeding of kea and kaka, to our staff contributing expertise to the Free the Bears facilities in Cambodia and Vietnam and sea lion research in the Auckland Islands.

We value the connections we have with many conservation and research partner organisations, ranging from Te Papa and Zealandia to Massey and Victoria universities and the Department of Conservation. We want to sustain and grow these connections to generate benefits for Wellington and for conservation.

In the last year, Wellingtonians have demonstrated their support for Wellington Zoo in many practical ways, ranging from donations to the inaugural Community Campaign for The Nest, to memberships of the Big Bite Club. We have especially appreciated strong support from our principal funder, Wellington City Council, and value the interest and commitment of Her Worship, the Mayor Kerry Prendergast, councillors and staff. We are grateful for wide support from the trusts, foundations, businesses and individuals who have contributed towards our capital projects and our daily work.

Rising costs, an important conservation agenda, and the current economic climate have presented challenges to our business this year. Zoo staff have worked hard to generate revenues of \$ 2.4 million, 47 per cent of the \$4.9 million it took to run the Zoo on a day to day basis.

With careful management of expenditure, we have finished the year in a positive [financial position](#) with a retained earnings closing balance of \$234,000. While this is

a pleasing improvement, at around five per cent of yearly expenditure, the Board considers this is an insufficient level of reserve given the variables and risks to both revenue and expenditures in Zoo operations each year. Additionally, the Board retains its medium term objective of building towards a prudent level of working capital to support the business.

Karen Fifield, our Chief Executive, continues to refine Wellington Zoo's [strategic direction](#) and give outstanding leadership to our Zoo and to the wider zoo industry. Her executive team, and their staff, demonstrate enormous commitment and professionalism, and are ably supported by our volunteers. It is their combined efforts that are generating these great steps forward, and trustees are grateful for all that they do.

I also salute the commitment and energy of my trustees over the past year—thank you all. We bid farewell to Lee Parkinson in June, and recognised especially his communications and marketing expertise, and his creative mind. We welcome Linda Meade as our newest trustee.

What Wellington Zoo achieves for Wellington happens with our supporters, visitors and community. We thank all of you, and invite you to join us in the next steps of our journey to become the best little Zoo in the world.

Denise Church, Chair, Wellington Zoo Trust

Chief Executive Report

This year we have made great strides in our journey to create the best little Zoo in the world.

We exceeded or met 20 of 23 targets set against our six strategic elements—[visitor experience](#), [financial sustainability](#), [staff development](#), [community support](#), [conservation outcomes](#) and [industry leadership](#). Our strategic elements continued to provide focus and clarity to deliver our vision.

The Nest, our new animal hospital and the largest of the Zoo Capital Programme projects, will open later in 2009. A hub for care, recovery and rehabilitation for both our Zoo animals and injured native wildlife, The Nest will provide the Wellington region with a one-of-a-kind facility. The success of the first ever Community Campaign this year to fundraise for The Nest indicates the support and interest this project has in Wellington.

We welcomed our Aussie dingoes this year who together with the llamas have added to the contact animal experience for our visitors. Our lion boys, Malik and Zulu, have been on breeding loan to Orana Wildlife Park this year—and they have achieved what they were sent there to do! Sadly, Molly, the last zebra in our Zoo was euthanased this year when her lameness ceased to respond to treatment.

However, the arrival of two pygmy marmosets, Machu and Picchu, from the United Kingdom has been a cause for celebration. Breeding successes this year with native species such as kea, for the first time at Wellington Zoo, continue to help us build a future for wildlife.

Programmes such as Bush Builders, which won a Department of Conservation Advocacy Award this year, ensure that we work with our community to compel people to care for the environment.

The development of our Conservation Strategy and the establishment of the Conservation Steering Group provide leadership for our conservation efforts. We were finalists in the Sustainable Business Challenge this year and hope to go one better in 2009. In July 2009, we were awarded Qualmark's Enviro-Gold certification, the first visitor attraction in Wellington to do so.

Our Zoo Ambassadors work along side our Trustees, staff and volunteers to showcase the work Wellington Zoo is doing. Their continued support is greatly appreciated. The establishment of the Big Bite Club this year with the endorsement of our Zoo Ambassadors has grown our support base in Wellington.

I am extremely proud of our staff and what they have achieved this year. It has been a year of continuous improvement and our staff continue to look for inventive ways to contribute to our vision. The creation of the Manager, People and Culture position this year has raised the bar for staff development and best practice in this important area of our Zoo.

In the 21st century a modern zoo must care for visitors, animals and staff in the best ways possible. The improvements to the physical assets through the Zoo Capital

Programme projects have driven immense change and built a platform to enhance the visitor experience, animal housing and staff facilities.

Wellington, as our creative green capital city, deserves a Zoo to be proud of and we are committed to delivering just that through continued innovation, resilience, prudent business decisions, commitment to sustainability and a healthy productive culture.

Karen Fifield, Chief Executive, Wellington Zoo Trust

Treading gently

That Wellington Zoo is the first visitor attraction in Wellington (and one of only 11 attractions nationwide) to win Qualmark Enviro-Gold certification speaks volumes about the Zoo as a sustainable business.

With tenacity and expertise, the Green Team has this year continued to ‘green’ the Zoo to the benefit of visitors, staff, Wellington—and the planet.

Sustainability is firmly in place across all strategic planning, and Zoo leaders cultivate a cultural mindset that considers the long-term future of the Zoo, our staff, visitors and animals.

This commitment was acknowledged in September when the Zoo was named a finalist in the not-for-profit category of the Sustainable Business Network’s (Central Region) Get Sustainable Challenge.

Many new initiatives have been implemented this year, in addition to a core of environmentally-responsible initiatives.

These include:

- a project that saw 82 per cent of staff commit to a ‘personal sustainability commitment’ such as walking to work three times a week
- friendly food—a bumper crop of organic vegetables was grown to harvest for animals’ feed, and we switched to free-range eggs and chicken supplies
- a calendar of sustainable transport days in which staff committed to alternative means of commuting to the Zoo, celebrated with breakfast
- a waste management plan for the construction of The Nest that saw 17 skips of salvaged building materials reused or recycled
- the implementation of environmental innovations suggested by staff as part of an ongoing Sustainability Innovations Project. Of the 140 innovations submitted by the people who know our business the best, 80 tasks have been completed and plans are in place for 16 more
- a reduction in water consumption from 49 million litres in 2004/2005 to just more than 26 million litres in 2008/2009.



Wellington Zoo staff are strongly aware of our responsibility to communicate these commitments by way of advocating for sustainability, the environment, and global wildlife conservation.

In addition to conservation messages woven throughout talks and presentations to visitors, and through marketing and learning material, the Zoo drafted a Sustainability Commitment made available to stakeholders. It reads:

Wellington Zoo's sustainability initiatives stem from our commitment to reduce the environmental and social impact of our activities. This commitment is also driven by our belief that sustainable practices enhance our visitors' experience and gives Wellingtonians even more reason to be proud of their Zoo.



As an ongoing journey, our pathway to sustainability will improve with time and experience. In order to reach our goals we pledge:

- to think before we buy and build— informed decisions will help us reduce the amount of raw materials used, eliminate pollution and reduce waste production. Most significantly to Wellington Zoo, sustainable buying can also help stop the destruction of valuable native forests and natural habitats worldwide
- to think before we use— efficient use of energy, water, office products, fuel and other resources we use to ensure we reduce our environmental impact
- to think before we discard— reusing, recycling and composting as much waste as possible will help reduce air and land pollution, and reduce the amount going into landfills
- to share our experience and grow— happy, well-informed staff are a crucial asset to our success, and to our visitors' experience. Through encouragement

and training, Wellington Zoo empowers its people to actively participate in our sustainability journey

- to nurture our community—we share many dreams with our community and through reciprocal involvement we will step forwards towards our sustainability goals together
 - to build a future for wildlife—conservation is at the core of all we do at Wellington Zoo. We aim to be a 21st century conservation agency which builds community understanding and support for positive action for the world's animal species
 - to protect our future—forward-looking financial decisions made in partnership with our community of donors, visitors and customers will ensure Wellington Zoo's financial sustainability.
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Conservation action

Conservation is at the heart of all we do at Wellington Zoo and the Conservation Strategy 2008-2010 has continued to inform decision-making across the Zoo with the intent of keeping conservation top of mind.

Inspiring change

We believe that our visitors care about conservation like we do, and for that reason we build targeted, achievable conservation action messages into our animal talks, presentations, and learning sessions that shape their experience at our Zoo.



These messages relate to the animals we care for at the Zoo and were chosen for their relevance to all visitors. We encourage our visitors to help the plight of exotic species, and New Zealand native species, by:

- purchasing sustainable timber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and/or New Zealand pine
- bringing cats inside at night and keeping dogs on a lead
- reducing, reusing and recycling.

Lending a hand

The provision of ‘special conservation leave’ introduced this year allows staff to participate in field conservation projects both here and abroad.

This symbiotic arrangement sees Zoo staff learn from, and contribute expertise to, conservation projects of national and international significance.

This year, staff from across Zoo teams:

- immersed themselves in intensive kakapo nest-monitoring work with the Department of Conservation on Codfish (Whenua Hou) Island
- circumnavigated a steep and slippery sun-Antarctic island to count all Chatham Island Albatross nests
- pioneered anaesthesia methods for New Zealand sea lions on the Otago Peninsula, and satellite-tagged others on the Auckland Islands
- tracked and captured rhinoceroses in South Africa
- worked with conservation partner Free the Bears in South-East Asia
- lent an experienced hand to screen native birds for disease on Mokua Island.



Investing in the future

This year the cross-disciplinary Conservation Steering Group researched and recommended five conservation projects:

Bush Builders

Awarded a 2008 Wellington Conservation Award, this hands-on community environmental education programme aims to reconnect urban children with their local environment.

By conducting surveys and acquiring first-hand knowledge of the biodiversity around their school, students benefit from an increased awareness of their local environment. Results from a review of Bush Builders in its first year support the theory that behaviour and attitudinal change is strongly associated with interactive learning.

Bush Builders was supported this year by the Nikau Foundation.



Grand and Otago skink project

This established project in partnership with the Department of Conservation (DoC) protects two of New Zealand's most endangered reptile species—grand and Otago skinks.

Wellington Zoo is caring for an insurance population of 12 Otago skinks and six grand skinks as part of a larger governmental recovery project. It is hoped that these skinks will breed, improving genetic diversity in the population and increasing the species chances of survival.



Cheetah Outreach

Wellington Zoo supports the South African-based Cheetah Outreach project through its sponsorship of an Anatolian shepherd dog.

Bred to purpose more than 6,000 years ago, these strong, hardy dogs protect livestock from free-ranging cheetahs among other predators, thus reducing conflict between farmers and cheetahs.

We fund the purchase, training and veterinary treatment of one dog each year and supply a radio collar so that the dog can be located in the bush veldt.

Free the Bears

Wellington Zoo's relationship with Free the Bears was strengthened this year with the two-month placement of Paul Horton, Team Leader Carnivores, Birds and Reptiles, with the organisation's branches in Cambodia and Vietnam.

The organisation rescues and rehabilitates sun bears, Asiatic black bears and sloth bears in South-East Asia, and Paul supported the team with advice about bear husbandry, enrichment and training.

Native frogs

Established by DoC in 1996, the Native Frog Recovery Group guides the recovery of our four native frog species.

This year the group accepted our application to hold and breed native frogs here at the Zoo, starting with the vulnerable, nocturnal Maud Island frog that is only found on predator-free islands in the Marlborough Sounds.

Having confirmed this project, the Conservation Steering Group is applying for funds to help manage and house the imminent amphibian arrivals.

Building knowledge

Robust research projects are essential to inform and guide conservation initiatives worldwide. Wellington Zoo hosts and contributes to many exciting research projects, some of which are outlined here:

Controlling pesky possums

With the support of Wellington Zoo, Victoria University research that aims to find humane, more effective methods to control numbers of possums in New Zealand reached a new milestone this year.

Professor Doug Eckery commenced vaccine trials among three groups of possums housed at the Zoo; he hopes to prove that the agent used in the vaccination will trigger infertility.

The physiology of tuatara

Despite being one of New Zealand's most iconic native species, there are gaps in the body of knowledge around tuatara physiology.

A study of tuatara husbandry at Wellington Zoo, by Tristan Burgess from Massey University, aims to fill these gaps as part of a larger research project looking at metabolic bone disease in the species.

Catching a big boy

Catching a big boy—the nickname given to the massive male New Zealand sea lions by Dr Katja Geschke—takes time, patience and a fair dose of elbow-grease.

Katja, Manager of Conservation and Veterinary Science, was this year contracted by DoC to help dart, anaesthetise and take samples from adult male sea lions in the Auckland Islands. The methods were trialled for the first time on the islands and this pioneering project will inform DoC's species management plans.



Sharing our expertise in wildlife rehabilitation

As Wellington Zoo prepares for the opening of The Nest, its new animal and wildlife rehabilitation hospital, veterinary staff have continued to excel in wildlife rehabilitation this year.

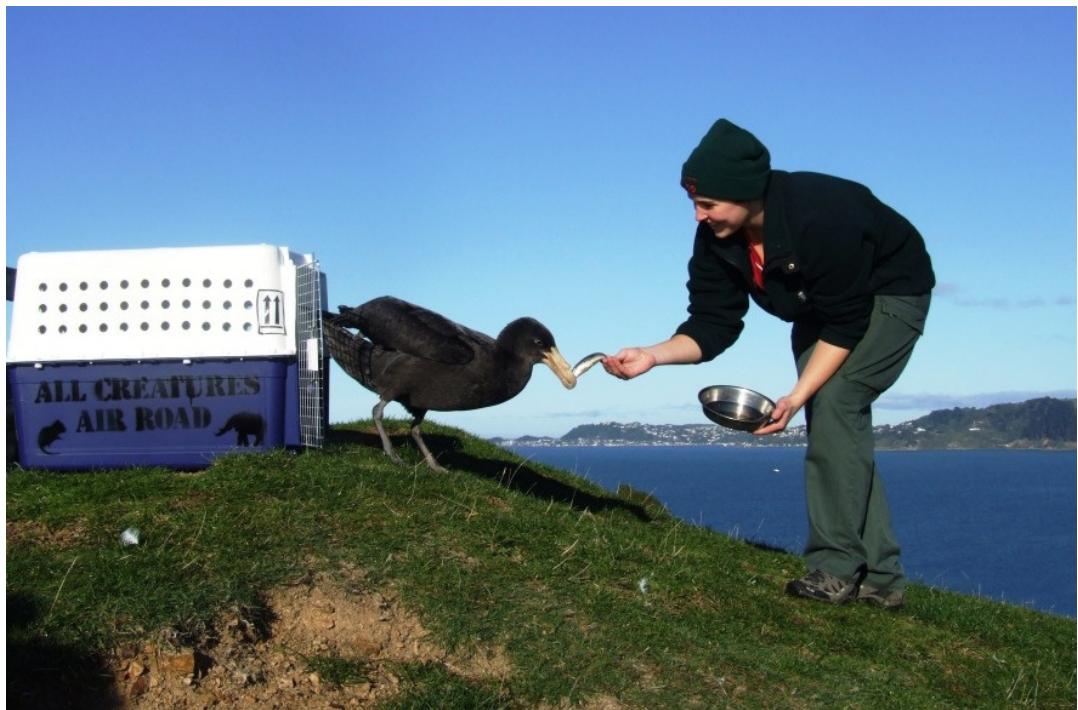


Ever-prepared for the unpredictable, the Zoo's veterinary team have this year treated 1,388 patients from Wellington Zoo and 45 more bought to the hospital for specialist veterinary treatment. Among these external patients successfully rehabilitated and released to the wild were a southern giant petrel and a little blue penguin.

The SPCA and DoC have sought our wildlife expertise for a greater number of native animals this year than the last.

In preparation for The Nest, Wellington Zoo organised a regional meeting for wildlife rehabilitation stakeholders, including DoC and Massey University, which triggered the development of standards for the care of wildlife in rehabilitation.

As with all capital development at Wellington Zoo, the objective to ensure informative, intimate and unique experiences for our visitors has driven the design of The Nest.



Our visitors' experience

The success of Wellington Zoo's strategic intent to ensure outstanding, intimate and unique visitor experiences is best seen in the smiles of the Wellington families, holiday-makers, tourists and school-groups who continue to support us.

178,386 people visited the Zoo this year, 32 per cent of whom were aged 3-16 years and 69 per cent percent of whom came from the Wellington region.

Among our visitors are long-standing friends and Zoo Crew members—highly-valued visitors who appreciate that there is more to do at the Zoo than ever before.

A site for sore eyes

This year the Zoo website was give a much-needed overhaul; the final product is more user-friendly, more informative, offers online purchases and facilitates online donations.

The Commercial Development team continue to refine and update the site to better meet visitors' expectations, communicate our sustainability and conservation initiatives, and to realise commercial potential.



Boosting the Crew

More people than ever this year have joined the Zoo Crew membership scheme in recognition of its fantastic value for money and membership benefits.

The Trust now has 2,718 members, up from 2,000 at this time last year, and four lively and varied Zoo Crew events enhanced our events calendar. As some of our strongest advocates, Zoo Crew members are valued companions on our journey to become the best little Zoo in the world.

Making their day

More than 16,000 visitors met a cockatoo, blue-tongued skink or shingleback lizard out in the Zoo under the supervision of a Guide this year. They enjoyed getting up close to our two new dingoes on their daily walks, and the sight of lush-coated llamas halter-led around the Zoo.

Many more visitors took home great stories after meeting our servals on impromptu walks outside of their enclosures, and other contact animals that star in our education programmes.

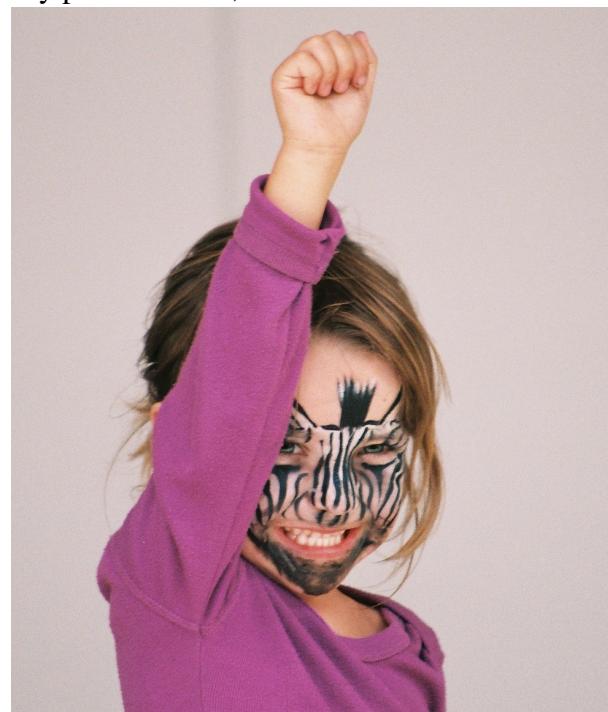
Tahi the kiwi continues to inspire his audience during daily presentations, rain or shine, in the Wild Theatre. The one-legged beloved kiwi now shares the limelight with Biff the brush-tail possum who, besides delighting visitors, helps to bring home the wildlife conservation messages woven throughout the presentation.

As the financial year came to a close a brand-new demonstration debuted. After months in the making and training of servals, an otter and cockatoos, 'Amazing Animals' is now firmly on the Zoo programme and is set to become a star attraction.

A living classroom

More than 15,000 students visited the Zoo this year, most as participants in the Ministry of Education's Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom (LEOTC) programme.

This represents an eight per cent increase in the number of LEOTC students and is an indication of the strength of our education programmes.



In May we trialled a new programme in partnership with fellow LEOTC provider Capital E, that combines two distinct learning experiences and that is now a permanent offering.

Of significance to national Te Reo Māori initiatives, we published learning booklets for our six most popular programmes in Māori and made them available on the Zoo's website. We also installed bilingual signs in the Living Room and in Zoo grounds.

Teacher satisfaction with the Zoo's learning programmes remains high; 100 per cent of teachers reported that sessions met or exceeded their learning objectives.

Happy holidays

More than 930 children attended fully-booked School Holiday programmes run by Zoo Educators during the three term breaks this year. The 20 per cent increase in bookings testifies to the fun had by children during the action-packed programmes.



Close Encounters of the best kind

In addition to meeting the animals out and about with Guides in the Zoo, our visitors are offered the extraordinary experience of getting up close to big cats, red pandas, giraffes and cheetahs.

More than 1028 people bought Close Encounters this year, taking home with them new perspectives and knowledge about these animals both at Wellington Zoo and in the wild.

By doing so, our visitors also support global wildlife conservation; 10 per cent of proceeds from Close Encounters go to the Wellington Zoo Conservation Fund that supports our Conservation Projects.



Amazing animals

A year in the life of Wellington Zoo involves a remarkable amount of change among an evolving animal collection.

Wellington Zoo staff care for more than 550 animals. They can distinguish one lion's call from another, name a chimpanzee from a distance, and are sensitive to behaviours and expressions that, to others, can seem imperceptible.

Our staff oversee enclosure renovations, the temporary and permanent relocation of animals, and the importation and introduction of new arrivals. They deal with death and disappointment, and celebrate the birth of offspring—many of whom are vital to an endangered population.



Significant changes to our animal collection this year include:

- the transfer of lions Malik and Zulu to Orana Wildlife Park in December where they are on loan for the purpose of breeding
- the arrival of two pure-bred dingoes from the Dingo Discovery Centre in Victoria. Many visitors have met the sociable, leash-trained Kora and Burnum on their walks around the Zoo

- the arrival of three llamas from Nelson—halter-trained for walks and contact with visitors
 - the euthanasia of Molly, a Grant's zebra whose long-term lameness ceased to respond to specialist veterinary treatment
 - the birth of a male baboon that helped to settle the larger group and dissipate aggression
 - the long-awaited arrival of two pygmy marmosets from the Banham Zoo in the United Kingdom
 - the fledging of the first two kea chicks hatched at Wellington Zoo, and that of two kaka chicks destined for release at Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust
 - the introduction of three new spider monkeys to the others on Monkey Island, paving the way for spider monkey babies for the first time in 14 years.
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Community matters

Wellington Zoo is part of the community and seeks to involve, nurture and reciprocate where possible.

The strategic intent to seek lasting community support and participation shapes our events calendar, staff commitment to visitor engagement and our visitor experience programming.

Something for everyone

From science seminars on Conservation Day to \$5 entry on Winter Wednesdays in August, events and promotions are planned with our diverse community in mind.

In July, Cheetah Outreach founder Annie Beckhelling spoke to Zoo visitors about global cheetah conservation efforts, and to local schools as part of her Zoo-sponsored visit.

In October, renowned conservationist Dr Jane Goodall addressed a sell-out audience who packed the Wild Theatre and queued happily for autographed copies of the eminent primatologist's new book. As the only New Zealand zoo to host Dr Goodall, we also invited four New Zealand scientists to present alongside her, managed a press conference and facilitated in-depth interviews with key media.



On Labour Day in October we threw a party to celebrate the first birthday of our beloved baby chimpanzee Beni. More than 2,000 visitors (a record for a non-discounted event) came to say hi to Beni, share a huge cake and to laugh at our

keepers' stories about a year in the life of a baby chimp.



The fourth annual Neighbours' Barbecue in January, held in partnership with Wellington City Council's City Housing team, saw a record attendance by our closest neighbours. 682 people accepted our invitation for a free after-hours event on a balmy summer evening. They enjoyed a sausage sizzle, face-painting and time spent up close with our animals and Guides.

With \$1 entry for children and a full day of fun activities, Children's Day at the Zoo in March is a firm favourite for Wellington families. More than 1,940 people visited this year to see The Plops, Zappo the Magician, chill out to story-telling and visit their favourite animals. The Radio Network sponsored the event again this year, adding to the fun with giveaways, and Tip Top also came on board.

Besides pulling out all the stops for the children, we hosted a charming 'adults-only' Valentine's early-evening event with fun talks about our animals' mating behaviours, a band, candle-lit dinners and gourmet picnic platters.

And following Children's Day we rolled out the red carpet in late March for the worldwide launch of the *WotWots*, Weta Workshop's brilliant series for toddlers that was filmed mostly at the Zoo. All visitors were invited to watch special preview screenings and meet the show's characters.





Networking nicely

In April we held the Big Bite, a gorgeous early-evening fundraising event hosted by Zoo Ambassador Jane Diplock, AO.

130 guests were treated to a roving feast of three courses served at differently-themed locations, culminating a hilarious auction lead by John Campbell and Carol Hirschfeld in the Wild Theatre. The auction raised \$20,000 and the Big Bite was so much fun that we intend to host the event biannually and to keep guests informed and involved through the Big Bite Club.

Wellington Zoo extends a hearty ‘thanks’ to those who brought the Big Bite to life: Spotless Services, Tip Top Ice Creams, Saatchi & Saatchi, Ambassadors Jane Diplock and Cameron Harland, Donna Dentice, Lillias Bell, Nathalie Hofsteed, Caroline Steele, Bronwyn Bennett, Richard Taylor and Her Worship, The Mayor Kerry Prendergast.



Community integration

A number of our valued volunteers work with us through different community integration programmes such as Emerge, an agency that supports people with disabilities seeking employment in Wellington.

This year we continued to host pupils from St Bernard's College in Lower Hutt through the Gateway programme. Run by the Tertiary Education Commission, the programme is designed to ease the transition from school to work by providing students with the opportunity to combine school study with workplace learning and experience.

The Zoo also welcomed volunteers through Live NZ, an agency that places international exchange students with voluntary organisations.

Community support

This year Wellington Zoo again supported Vincents Art Workshop, a community-based initiative that provides access to arts and craft facilities, skilled tuition, and materials within a supportive environment. Workshop participants were welcomed into the Zoo to sketch and paint their favourite animals for a special show opened by Chief Executive Karen Fifield.

Speaking up

Wellington Zoo continued to enjoy a high profile in local and national media again this year, for overwhelmingly positive reasons.

Our staff, as industry leaders, offered authoritative comments on issues of international interest such as the conservation of native species, swine flu preparations

and the fatal tiger mauling at Zion Wildlife Park. Karen Fifield published a feature opinion piece highlighting the devastation of animal theft, and a letter to the editor clarifying our stance on close encounters with potentially dangerous animals.

Print profiles of Karen, Mauritz Basson, Katja Geschke and Gemma Stewart among others helped to raise awareness of the diverse expertise concentrated here.

Television crews crammed into the Hospital and inched through crowds to cover Beni's birthday, the lions' departure to Orana Wildlife Park, the dingoes' arrival, The Nest appeal, and Jane Goodall's press conference.



Print, radio and web-based media published a veritable A-Z of Zoo stories with front-page and lead-bulletin articles among them: Bush Builders, little blue penguins and baboon society. Paternity tests, dingo walks and spider monkey love-matches. Wildlife rehabilitation, chimpanzees' flu inoculation, and sea lion fatality investigations. Native bird fledglings, research offerings and enrichment 'mouse-sicle' treats...the list goes on.

Lastly, the screening of family-friendly television series *The WotWots* and *Wild Vets* has brought the Zoo that much closer to the hearts and minds of an Australasian audience.



Our strategic direction

Now in our sixth year as the Wellington Zoo Trust we continue to strive towards our dream of becoming the best little Zoo in the world.

It's a big dream for a small zoo, and for that reason we concentrate our resources, energies and talents on six areas that are crucial to our future.

We aim to:

- create outstanding, intimate and unique visitor experiences—by bringing people up close to our animals, strengthening learning programmes, improving visitor facilities and developing robust market research tools to inform our direction
- lead the zoo industry into the 21st century—by demonstrating expertise in wildlife care, animal management, conservation and learning, through our representation on industry committees, and through our support of national and international breeding and conservation programmes
- improve our financial sustainability—by maintaining the support of the Wellington City Council, increasing revenue gained through visitor spend and commercial opportunities and by maximising fundraising activity
- attract and retain valued and motivated staff—by enhancing our learning culture, ensuring the best of advice and support for team leaders and managers, and by making the most of people's passion and skills
- lead and participate in conservation and research programmes—through our collaboration with conservation partners such as the Department of Conservation, through projects based both in the field and on site at the Zoo, and by further integrating conservation with animal management and our visitors' experience
- secure lasting community support and participation—by developing our volunteer programme, building strategic partnerships, and by ensuring our communities have meaningful opportunities to join us on our journey.



Building our 21st century zoo

The 10-year Zoo Capital Programme (ZCP) is pivotal to our dream and this year the Zoo has continued to grow and change before our eyes, and our visitors' eyes.

Importantly, it has also done so with financial prudence and integrity to our strategic elements.

Feathering The Nest

Construction began on the Zoo's new animal and wildlife rehabilitation hospital, The Nest, in mid-August. The first construction steps were celebrated with the sealing of a time capsule by the (then) Minister of Conservation Hon Steve Chadwick and attended by Wellington City Councillors Celia Wade-Brown and Ray Ahipene-Mercer, MP Annette King and members of the Wellington Tents Trust among other Nest stakeholders.



Meet the locals

Intensive but rewarding workshops saw the refining of designs for our New Zealand precinct, Meet the Locals, that will take Zoo visitors on a journey of New Zealand. Each part of the experience will introduce our visitors to a different array of wildlife, and highlight the connectedness of wildlife to land with an emphasis on positive

conservation actions for a sustainable future.



African Unity

Visitors have enjoyed an enhanced ‘African experience’ this year, through the linking of our African Savannah exhibits to create a cohesive experience.

Centred around a beautiful bronze sculpture by the late, internationally renowned sculptor Colin Webster-Watson, a new garden outside of the cheetahs’ enclosure was the first phase of the African Unity project.

Interpretive elements highlighting the unique aspects and care of the chimpanzees, baboons, giraffes and African wild dogs have been designed and installed. The concrete of the wild dogs’ service areas was re-imagined and a comfortable sleeping den built near the front of their enclosure to bring the dogs that much closer to visitors.

A bridge spanning the newly-landscaped dry river bed connects with the Nyalazi River Hide that offers a sheltered view of the giraffes, ostriches, guinea fowl and blackbuck.

Informed by visitor research indicating the popularity of the giraffe and chimpanzee talks, we have made these even better with the installation of permanent sound systems. At the close of the financial year, the next phase of the African Unity project is well underway, with plans finalised for a themed African village that will highlight the relationship between the people and animals who share the vast continent.

African Unity projects were funded with grants from the Colin Webster-Watson estate, the Mainland Foundation and the Lion Foundation.



Livening up the Living Room

A grant from the Stout Trust enabled the renovation of the Living Room—the centre of formal learning programmes at Wellington Zoo.

From a 4.5m tiger photo on the wall, to animal-themed cupboard handles, the new décor celebrates the animals with whom we share the planet. And the room itself is home to an amazing collection of animals that bring learning sessions to life. Rats, bearded dragons, shingle-back lizards, invertebrates, fish and axolotl live alongside hedgehogs, guinea pigs and a blue-tongued skink.

Powering the Zoo

The Power Project to install a new 11kV electricity supply was completed in September, following the electrification of our perimeter fence in August. The new electricity supply will meet the needs of The Nest among other new capital developments.

People Power

Behind every newborn animal, conservation project or inspired child are people whose dedication and resourcefulness characterise the human face of the 21st century zoo.

With more than 60 permanent full-time staff and 65 volunteers, Wellington Zoo hums with personalities and nationalities.

Many new initiatives this year were designed with staff development and morale in mind, and the 2009 Climate Survey results indicate high levels of satisfaction in the areas of innovation, interpersonal relationships, training opportunities, communication and line management.



Cultivating potential

Led by Chief Executive Karen Fifield, Zoo senior managers strive to cultivate a culture of learning that is essential to the Zoo moving forward.

A good example of this culture is the provision of ‘special conservation leave’ that allows staff to participate in field conservation projects.

Leadership is also nurtured among Zoo staff; Karen Fifield and Beth Houston (Manager Commercial Development) were accepted into the Stanford Executive Programme for Non Profit Leaders, and Leadership New Zealand Programme respectively.

Dr Katja Geschke, Manager, Conservation and Veterinary science, was appointed to the Field Conservation Committee of the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria, joining Collections Development Co-ordinator Simon Eyre and Karen Fifield who also hold regional zoo industry positions within ARAZPA.



Human resources systems and initiatives this year have seen:

- team development prioritised with the launch of a ‘Star Performing Teams’ 360-degree appraisal tool used to seek feedback. The Senior Management Team also used the system to rate themselves as a team as part of a larger workshop
- a ‘Learning Calendar’ of fortnightly learning sessions delivered by our own staff who shared know-how and skills in subjects such as project management and the interpretation of technical drawings. The sessions provide excellent learning opportunities for staff members of all levels, and bring staff from different teams together
- the introduction of a Flexible Working Arrangements Policy through which permanent staff may request flexible working arrangements around hours of work, days of work or place of work

- the successful application for the ACC's Workplace Safety Management Practices Primary level entitling the Zoo to an ACC rebate.

Acknowledging our Ambassadors

Wellington Zoo is fortunate to have the support of many Wellingtonians. Amongst our most passionate supporters are our Zoo Ambassadors. Here is what they have to say:

Jane Diplock, AO

“Wellington Zoo inspires me as a special place to understand our environment and the wildlife of the planet. I am an Ambassador for the Zoo because I appreciate the important role that zoos have in transforming our views of the environment and providing a way for us to strive towards a better future. Wellington Zoo, as a leader for a sustainable world, deserves the support of all Wellingtonians.”

His Excellency John Dauth, LVO (previous Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand)

“Zoos can be an ideological conundrum. But their huge number of supporters deserve the very best. And, above all else, so do the animals. That’s why I am keen to offer my strong support to Karen Fifield, and her team and the Wellington Zoo as the best little Zoo in the world.”

Cameron Harland, GM, Saatchi & Saatchi Wellington (now at Park Road Post)

“I love the Zoo. I remember times with mum and dad wondering up the hill and the combined excitement of an ice-cream and seeing the elephant. Sadly the elephant is no longer with us, but the wonders of the zoo are still very much alive. Being able to show my sons Finn and Oliver a real live giraffe, lion or tiger in our wonderful little city is truly brilliant. I support the Zoo for all the worthy things they strive to achieve, to educate us and future generations about sustainability and about wildlife, but more than that I support the Zoo because it is a wonderous place.”

Tana and Rochelle Umaga and family

“We love Wellington Zoo. We leave with happy memories and we always want to go back. There is so much to do and see and learn while still having fun. We support the Zoo and all it is doing to make Wellington a better place for Wellingtonians and their families and friends.”

Viva la volunteer

Wellington Zoo could not thrive without the help of those who selflessly donate their time and energy. More than 65 volunteers worked almost 10,000 hours this year, the equivalent of five full-time employees. Volunteers see events run smoothly, make enrichment activities for animals, weed enclosures and stuff envelopes on rainy days.

For the first time this year we have inducted volunteers with a sole visitor focus, to enhance the Zoo visit and to help out our Visitor Experience team. We have also placed volunteers with professional experience with the marketing, fundraising, administrative and learning teams.

We have again this year welcomed corporate groups into the Zoo to get stuck into larger projects that require the type of team work these volunteers in turn benefit from. This year 37 corporate groups from banks and government departments among other diverse organisations have helped out with planting, grounds-keeping and office work.

The Zoo strives to give our volunteers the attention they deserve. All new volunteers participate in a fun and informative induction day, are given a comprehensive overview of Wellington Zoo as an organisation, and are invited to a function organised especially for them around International Volunteer Day in December.

A front-page article in the Dominion Post this year took Wellington Zoo's volunteer programme as its focus and featured a gorgeous photo of a Zoo volunteer with our two dingoes.

Under our wing

Four Wildlife Medicine Masters students from Massey University work alongside permanent Zoo veterinarian staff as veterinary residents, and are rostered to the Zoo hospital for 4-month cycles.

Wellington Zoo also serves as a living classroom for Unitec students enrolled in the Captive Animal Management course. For most, their time here is a first taste of a career in zoo keeping.

Who we are

Permanent and fixed-term staff employed by Wellington Zoo in the 2008/2009 financial year are:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Anna Bryant | Dave French | Katie MacKinnon |
| Mauritz Basson | Katja Geschke | Cath MacLachlan |
| Barbara Blanchard | Sally Gough | Angelina Martelli |
| John Brien | Arti Govind | Bronwyn McCulloch |
| Cassandra Butler | Stephanie Gray | Rachel McKelvie |
| Dion Chait | Marina Greco | Andrew Morris |
| Lincoln Chapman | Kelly Green | Suzette Nicholson |
| Katie Chittenden | Nick Gyde | Rebecca Orr |
| Caroline Colgan | Vanessa Heaford | David PadDoCk |
| Andrea Collier | Manu Hira | Nicki Papworth |
| Linda Cook | Jacqui Hooper | Karen Parr |
| Delia Culling | Talya Horrocks | Vimal Patel |
| Deepak Dathatri | Paul Horton | Ben Pocock |
| Margaret Davis | Beth Houston | Ross Provan |
| Paul Dravitski | Amy Hughes | Murray Roberts |
| Oliver Du Bern | Simon Hunt | Sarah Satterthwaite |
| Tamzin Dunn | Hollie Jackson | Gemma Stewart |
| Rowena Edwards | Elise Kovac | Meagan Thomas |
| Simon Eyre | Susan Macdonald | Amanda Tiffin |
| Karen Fifield | Edy MacDonald | Annemieke Timmermans |

Willem Van der Merwe

Brendon Veale

Harmony Wallace

Olivia Walley

Don Watherston

Jo Webby

Jasmine Webster

Shane Whittaker

Toby Wilkes

Phil Wisker

Partners and sponsors

The magnitude of our partner organisations and the individuals who support Wellington Zoo cannot be overstated. Their contribution to our visitors' experience, our animals' wellbeing, our conservation and sustainability initiatives and our community outreach is invaluable.

As a charitable trust we depend on the life-lines offered by committed Wellingtonians, granting agencies, businesses and visitors.

Wellington City Council

As the Zoo's principal funder, the Wellington City Council (WCC) is our most important partner.

This year, WCC funding helped to construct The Nest, the most ambitious and significant of projects in the Zoo Capital Programme.

WCC funding helped to extend the African Unity project and the installation of a new power supply.

We are also indebted to the WCC for its continued support of our day-to-day operations; an annual operational expenditure grant of \$2,687,500 helps us keep our animals in the best of health and the Zoo open to our visitors 364 days a year.

Zoo Capital Programme

By the end of June 2009, Wellington Zoo Trust has raised \$2.29 million towards our 10-year capital development project, with \$2.71 million yet to achieve.

Fundraising this year focused largely on The Nest, Wellington Zoo's animal and wildlife rehabilitation hospital that is due to open at the close of 2009.



Commercial partners

Our catering suppliers, Spotless Services (NZ), have been on board for a year now, working closely with the Zoo on fantastic, fun events such as the Big Bite.

Operational donors

We give our heart-felt thanks to the donors who continue to support the Zoo through cash and in-kind donations:

- Pacific Radiology provides invaluable support to the Zoo's veterinary team through the provision of x-rays, CT scans and MRIs among diagnostic services

- Arataki Honey donates cash and honey supplies for our three Asian sun-bears. Through this partnership the Zoo and Arataki Honey make donations to Free the Bears, an organisation that rescues and rehabilitates bears in South-East Asia
- Saatchi & Saatchi continue to produce outstanding creative ideas for Zoo products and events. This year they put their all into our ‘adults only’ Valentine’s event and the Big Bite
- The Dominion Post provides the Zoo with a cash donation and free advertising in return for our purchase of discounted newspapers that we then make available, free, to our visitors
- The Radio Network sponsors our red pandas and Children’s Day, and facilitates many publicity opportunities. They bring four groups of excited children to the Zoo each year for a red panda Close Encounter that is broadcast to Classic Hits listeners
- Tip Top ice cream came on board for Children’s Day and funded bright new signage for the food kiosk
- Go Wellington refreshed the Zoo-branded bus so that it stands out even more in traffic, and have given the Zoo free poster advertising space this year.

We also thank the companies who generously support us through donations in-kind:

- The Print Room contribute to the costs of printing our quarterly newsletter on sustainably-sourced paper
- New Zealand Post contributed several thousand Community Post envelopes
- Southern Cross Hospitals has once again contributed medical equipment for the Zoo’s current hospital and The Nest
- Kirkcaldie and Stains, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Wellington, chose the Zoo as their Christmas parade charity recipient. The store also gave us space in-store to sell products over the Christmas retail period.

Many companies and individuals made big-hearted cash and in-kind donations to the Zoo this year:

| Funding source | Amount | Purpose |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Koala Trust | \$10,626 | The Nest |
| New Zealand Community Trust | \$200,000 | The Nest |
| Southern Trust | \$80,000 | The Nest |
| Pelorus Trust | \$50,000 | The Nest |
| Endeavour Trust | \$5,000 | The Nest |
| Lion Foundation | \$18,000 | African Unity |

| | | |
|--|----------|---|
| Colin Webster-Watson Estate | \$50,000 | African Unity |
| Trusts Charitable Foundation | \$5,000 | The Nest |
| Perry Foundation | \$10,000 | The Nest |
| Brian Whiteacre Trust | \$5,000 | The Nest |
| Ministry of Education | \$75,555 | Learning Experiences Outside of the Classroom |
| TG McCarthy Trust | \$10,000 | Part funding for a salary for an educator |
| Estate of Colin Webster-Watson | \$50,000 | African Village interpretation |
| Stout Trust | \$30,000 | Upgrade of the Living Room |
| Kirkcaldies & Stains and Rotary Club of Wellington | \$21,000 | The Nest |



Financial sustainability and success

As a charitable trust governed by a Board of Trustees, financial prudence is of utmost importance to the sustainability of Wellington Zoo.

A trust since 2003, the Zoo has grown into a proficient not-for-profit organisation that strives to reach significant commercial and fundraising targets. This financial year, we exceeded targets for four of five commercial products (including Close Encounters and Sleepovers) and 20 of 23 key performance measures.

Marketing and fundraising strategies inform all commercial activities. This year, 47 per cent of our operating revenue was generated through visitation, activities such as Close Encounters, functions, events, Zoo Crew membership and specific fundraising campaigns.

The reality of zoo business means we have to meet a high level of fixed costs to feed, treat and care for our animal collection. With animal welfare and our visitors' comfort of utmost priority, the Zoo must meet operational costs that in 2008/09 were \$4.9 million in total.

The Wellington Zoo Trust is committed to reducing its dependence on operational funding provided by Wellington City Council over the long term. We have made much progress in this aim and in 2008/09 we earned:

- \$1,420,000 from visitor admissions
- \$318,000 from commercial products sales
- \$242,000 in Zoo shop sales
- \$909,000 in funding raised for capital projects
- \$120,000 in operational sponsorships and grants.



Information is the key

Robust and relevant customer and market research serves to galvanise commercial strategy, and inform our thinking.

This year we commenced a major research project designed to answer key questions about the Zoo's long term financial growth. This project was shaped around a key question identified by staff during a research workshop: "How do we encourage 200,000 to visit, do more in the Zoo, come back and bring others?"

Having analysed all available data from both internal and external sources, and completed customer focus groups, the project team are ready for the final phase of the project in the new financial year.

Raising awareness

A survey commissioned in the previous year found that only 31 per cent of participants were aware that Wellington Zoo is a charitable trust in need of financial support.

Given that our sustainability as a charitable trust depends on stakeholders' perspectives and awareness, these findings drove a refined strategic focus for fundraising campaigns this year.

The launch of the Zoo's inaugural community fundraising campaign presented an excellent opportunity to reassess the situation with a post-campaign survey. The results indicate a statistically-significant five per cent increase in the level of community awareness of the Zoo as a charitable trust.

The campaign itself raised more than \$52,000 towards the construction of The Nest, using multiple channels—web-based and on-site appeals, a text-to-donate appeal, advertising and a direct mail campaign. Many new donors came on board and we hope to keep them close.

As well as raising much-needed funds, the campaign was an invaluable learning experience; we now know much more about how to fundraise for our Zoo through the community.



Financial Statements

Downloadable PDF of Financial Statements [hyperlink]

Wellington Zoo Trustees



Wellington Zoo Trustees, from left to right:

Denise Church, Chairperson

Linda Meade

Phillip Meyer, Deputy Chair

Ross Martin

Frances Russell

Celia Wade-Brown

In absentia: Lee Parkinson