



# **Rob Stokes MP**

**Minister for the Environment**  
**Minister for Heritage**  
**Minister for the Central Coast**  
Assistant Minister for Planning

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Thursday, July 10

### **BLACK RHINO BREEDING SUCCESS CONFIRMED IN DUBBO**

Environment Minister Rob Stokes today announced two rare Black Rhinoceros at Taronga Western Plains Zoo are pregnant.

“The confirmed pregnancies are yet another success for the staff at Taronga Western Plains Zoo who work tirelessly for the conservation of this critically endangered species,” Rob Stokes said.

It is early in the pregnancy for female Black Rhinoceros, Bakhita and Kalungwizi, who are both due to give birth around mid-2015. This will be the first time the Zoo has had two Black Rhinoceros calves due at a similar time.

“Taronga Western Plains Zoo is a world-class open range zoo, and works closely with the International Rhino Foundation and with an international reputation in Black Rhinoceros breeding, research and conservation.”

“The Zoo has been very successful in breeding Black Rhinoceros across the program’s 20 year history, producing 11 Black Rhinoceros calves to date supporting the survival of this critically endangered species,”.

Poaching continues to be a major threat to the long-term survival of this species, with demand for rhinoceros horn surging across Asia.

“In 2013 over 1000 Rhinoceros were killed in South Africa alone, the worst year in the past decade. The appetite for Rhinoceros horn isn’t slowing down with this year almost 500 Rhinoceros have been poached in South Africa already, every birth is critically important for this species.”

“Zoos like Taronga Western Plains Zoo play an important role in ensuring Black Rhinos and other endangered species survive, by engaging people in efforts to protect these wonderful animals in the wild,” Troy Grant, Local Member for Dubbo said..

The gestation period for Black Rhinoceros is 14 – 16 months and so far keepers and veterinarians at the Zoo are very happy with both females’ progress. Both rhinoceros have bred before, with Bakhita giving birth in 2010 and Kalungwizi being the Zoo’s most successful breeder.

Taronga Western Plains Zoo is located in Dubbo in Central Western NSW. The Zoo is open daily from 9am – 4pm. For more information visit: [www.taronga.org.au](http://www.taronga.org.au).