



Rob Stokes MP
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MEDIA RELEASE

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FUNDING FOR TASSIE DEVIL MONITORING & HEATH CHECKS

Environment Minister and Minister for the Central Coast Rob Stokes and Member for Gosford Chris Holstein today announced NSW Government funding would now be available for the Devil Ark in Gosford for a range of activities to support their Tasmanian Devil breeding program.

Mr Stokes got up-close and personal with some devil joeys at the award winning Australian Reptile Park's facility, saying it would now have greater flexibility to use Environmental Trust funding to support its work to save the threatened species.

"The Devil Ark has had great success in protecting the Tasmanian Devil from devil facial tumour disease, which threatens the species' existence," Mr Stokes said.

"Devil Ark originally planned to breed 250 devils as an insurance population on the Australian mainland, which would allow devils to be released back to Tasmania, and the NSW Government provided a \$600,000 grant in 2011 to support their free-range breeding facility.

"The devil population has survived better than expected, so fewer devils need to be bred, and the ark now only needs to maintain a population of 150 Devils.

"The new agreement will allow funding to be used by Devil Ark keepers for monitoring of reproductive behaviours and social interactions; conducting regular health checks; and maintenance of fencing and enclosures."

Mr Holstein said other species will benefit from the Devil Ark's work.

"I'm proud the Central Coast has been able to help protect one of Australia's most iconic animals," Mr Holstein said.

Member for Upper Hunter George Souris, whose electorate takes in the other Devil Ark facility at Scone, praised the work of all involved.

"I commend the Australian Reptile Park for founding Devil Ark, for their work and congratulate them on their achievements, which includes receiving the Innovation Award from the Zoo and Aquarium Association in 2012."

Upper Hunter Mayor and Nationals candidate for Upper Hunter Michael Johnsen said other species would also benefit from the Devil Ark's efforts.

“A range of other endangered species, such as the Northern Quoll, could also benefit from lessons learnt by this project on small population management,” Mr Johnsen said.

Gosford Mayor Lawrie McKinna welcomed the funding reprofile.

“It’s very positive that the funding is being changed to support the program. It’s just a great initiative,” Mr McKinna said.

To read more about Devil Ark or to donate visit: www.devilark.com.au