

# MEDIA RELEASE



1 September 2009

## Indigenous Rangers Learn Croc Wrangling at Steve's Place

Terri Irwin has shared Steve Irwin's crocodile research techniques with Indigenous rangers on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve as part of a long term commitment to mentor, train and provide employment opportunities for Indigenous people.

Returning from the annual croc research trip, Terri said this was an important part of Australia Zoo's commitment to local Indigenous people.

"We caught 31 crocs up at the Reserve this year using all of Steve's capture and release techniques. It is so special and important for us to pass this knowledge onto those around us, and we are honoured to share this with the northern Kaanju people," Terri said.

"We also visited schools in Weipa, Mapoon and Napranum so that Bindi and Robert could share and learn from local children and Professor Craig Franklin gave a presentation to the Council of Mapoon about the scientific findings on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

"We welcome the opportunity to join in partnership with Traditional Owners to offer even more of these opportunities, and to share knowledge of this great country with each other," she said.

David Claudie – a Kuuku I'yu (northern Kaanju) elder, veteran ranger and CEO of the Chuulangun Aboriginal Corporation, , brought five of his Rangers to the Reserve to explore the special area, which neighbours the northern Kaanju homelands centred on the upper Wenlock and Pascoe Rivers.



Open every day (except Christmas Day) 9:00am - 5:00pm  
Steve Irwin Way, Beerwah, Sunshine Coast, QLD 4519 info@australiazoo.com.au Ph: (07) 5436 2000

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“The Wenlock River basin holds significant cultural and spiritual value for its Traditional Owners. It features many important Story Places, sacred ceremonial grounds, totemic sites, and areas of rock carving and painting,” David said.

“The whole Wenlock River, its tributaries and springs have enormous cultural significance as the Creator of *Ngaachi* (homelands) under the umbrella of *Pianamu* (Rainbow Serpent).

“For the northern Kaanju people the Wenlock River is also closely linked with the *I’wai* (Crocodile) Story,” David said.

“We are working with Australia Zoo towards protection of the Wenlock River and in respect for our totem the *I’wai*,” said David.

The Head Ranger on the Reserve, Barry Lyon, said that the teaching and learning was experienced by both parties.

“It really is a two way relationship. We do our best to impart the western science we have learned, but in return we learn so much about Aboriginal culture, and the Indigenous perspective,” Barry said.

“David and his Rangers are so knowledgeable about local wildlife and plants, it’s terrific sharing our ideas and the things we’ve learned together,” Barry said.

Terri and Australia Zoo will offer training and employment opportunities to local Indigenous groups in areas such as the arts, fire management, weed eradication and environmental research.



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Indigenous people will have the opportunity to travel to Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast to learn skills in an array of areas from construction to marketing, taking the skills and knowledge they acquire back to their own communities.

“Australia Zoo also employs over 600 people. We will offer these training and employment opportunities in perpetuity, not for a short term,” Terri said.

There are now over 210,000 people who have signed the petition. To join the fight and Save Steve’s Place, log on to [www.savestevesplace.com](http://www.savestevesplace.com) and sign the petition.

**-ENDS-**

For all media enquiries please contact: Emma McCudden  
PR & Communications Manager



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