



MEDIA RELEASE

6 May 2010

Traditional Owners demand protection of Reserve

“We’re going to stand our ground, on our ground” – Traditional Owner Cecil Arthur

Traditional Owners of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve have demanded the protection of the Reserve from mining.

Taepathiggi representative and Traditional Land Owner Cecil Arthur has pleaded for the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve (SIWR) to be saved and fears that mining on the Reserve will strip it of its heart and life source.

“We know that the gathering places are there (SIWR), the waterholes are there, the sacred sites are there, the massacre sites are there - all of these significant sites that we have to make sure are secured and kept for the next generation to actually see them on ground and not in an artefact or behind a library,” said Cecil.

“We want to make sure it is sacred, stays where it is, and remains there forever.”

Having had experience in mines, Cecil says he feels unbalanced and disconnected to the land when in a mine, and doesn’t believe that the land can be rehabilitated.

“I feel not connected (on a mine), I feel a bit unbalanced, I don’t feel fully structured to the land because I think that Mother Earth is being disturbed in a bad way that it shouldn’t be disturbed. And I can’t see Mother Earth getting put back the way it’s been promised to us,” said Cecil.

- More -



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
www.australiazoo.com.au





MEDIA RELEASE

- 2 -

“There is never potential to rehabilitate a land. There is never a way you can fill over a 12-foot hole back with the same resource that you’ve ripped out. What they take out is the heart of it, and the blood vessel that actually pumps Mother Earth. They replace it with topsoil, and it’s no longer natural.”

“Just like you and me – if you cut my veins I’ll bleed to death. It’s just like Mother Earth – if you take the heart and blood vessels out, it will never be replaced. You can never replace the same blood, the same oxygen, the same blood stream that runs through it, and get the heart beat back to its soul. It would be artificial.”

“If I’m going to hire someone for work in my house, I want to be able to hire someone who’s done this in practice and not just on a piece of paper. For a mine I want to be able to see a land that they have mined before. I want to be able to see a land that they have rehabilitated before. I want to be able to see what they are talking about. If they can’t show me what they say they can do, then that’s a different story.”

Cecil joined Taepathiggi Traditional Land Owner Alison Sailor in meeting with Terri Irwin to further discuss the importance of protecting the land that is so culturally significant to their people.

A partnership between Traditional Owners of the SIWR and Terri Irwin will provide mutually beneficial opportunities in perpetuity, including showcasing the culture of the people, while sharing a wealth of knowledge of the land.

- More -



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
www.australiazoo.com.au





MEDIA RELEASE

- 3 -

“First and foremost, having a presence on the Cape means being involved in the culture and community on the Cape,” said Terri Irwin.

“We’re not looking at locking the Reserve away, we’re looking at it being an icon property, and building a relationship with the local people, with the culture and community that’s there, and with opportunities and programs that will expand and emanate from this land.”

“It’s about getting Cecil and other Taepathiggi people back on country. It’s about supporting what we are learning from the Taepathiggi people about the land by giving an infrastructure of education and employment,” said Terri.

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

Alison Sailor, a Traditional Owner of the land and Community Police Officer, can see her people and community benefiting from the opportunities offered in the partnership, including opportunities for the next generations.

“I’m happy that there will be job opportunities for my people, for our Elders, for my mum. I’m happy we can all work together as one family, one people, and look toward the future,” said Alison.

- More -



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
www.australiazoo.com.au





MEDIA RELEASE

- 4 -

“My people and my community are very, very important to me, and personally I don’t want to leave my people and my community (to work in a mine) – I would want to stay and have a full time job in my community to help look after my people.”

“It would be sad to see people moving away from a community, and going out there to a mine and working when they could be back home helping the people of the community, helping our kids to be proactive, so our community doesn’t suffer.”

“No way in the world would I go work for a mining company.”

“I think our people have to remember that mining is not the only job opportunity out there. There are other opportunities as well, and it’s a privilege to be working with Terri and Australia Zoo.”

Indigenous people will also 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, as well as be provided the opportunity to showcase their culture and heritage on the world stage through Australia Zoo’s developments in Las Vegas.

“Australia Zoo currently employs 628 people. We will offer these training and employment opportunities in perpetuity, not for a short term,” Terri said.

- More -



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
www.australiazoo.com.au





MEDIA RELEASE

- 5 -

“The future for generations is just amazing. The scholarships, the future for our kids, to promote our culture, to actually do what’s been hidden in the dark in a bright way and a big way,” said Cecil.

“My heritage is so valuable to me. It’s what I’ve been taught by my grandmother, and I’ve got to protect it and make sure it is passed along to the next generation and is not going to get washed down the river.”

“The best opportunity I can see for me so far is my traditional outstation; taking my kids and Elders back to this country, healing the process that they’ve been through, giving them the gift that they’ve always asked for - to go back to their country. The kids can learn about their culture, what has been passed down generation to generation. We can teach them how to respect the land, how to respect the animals and respect the Elders, to learn about bush medicine, bush tucker and how to run a ceremony.”

Other Taepathiggi Traditional Owners have expressed interest in discussing with Terri Irwin the problems of a mine on their land.

- End -



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
www.australiazoo.com.au

