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TARONGA'S COMMITMENT TO CAMMERAIGAL COUNTRY: IMBEDDING WAYS OF WORKING THAT RESPECT AND INCLUDE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, CULTURES AND PLACE – TOWARDS SDG 10

Presented by

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ABSTRACT

Taronga, at both sites, has had a meaningful and productive relationship with Indigenous groups and people for a long time. Representatives of the local language groups of Cammeraigal and Wiradjuri have informed and assisted Taronga Zoo and Taronga Western Plains zoo respectfully. Indeed, for over twenty years Taronga has been actively working with Indigenous youth in mentoring and engagement programs. As Taronga focus on Indigenous perspective is sharpened it became an obvious move that it becomes a central theme and priority area of the new 2022-2225 strategic plan. Thus, the priority area of "Commitment to County" was developed and resourced to enable Taronga to extend its role in this area.

One of the opportunities to deliver this new focus area is the development of the Taronga's capital plan, including a new and engaging Australian experience. Taronga's Australia Precinct, on Cammeraigal Country, will take guests on a choreographed journey connecting through stories of relationships to Country - a rich tradition of integral connectedness for Taronga's domestic and international guests. Delivered through Cultural visual language, audio experience, emotive storytelling, sculptures, Indigenous spatial design, signage, live interpretive tours with Indigenous guides fundamentally change the way Taronga interacts with and shares engaging Cultural storytelling with zoo guests.

In order to build a deeper and more aligned relationship, the Taronga Aboriginal Advisory Group (TAAG), Cammeraigal Country, was developed. This body has been instrumental in lifting Indigenous insights and inputs to a new level and playing a key role to the development of a cutting-edge Indigenous experience in the new Australia precinct. The TAAG has also driven innovation and change in other areas of the business and is informing a language and employment strategy. This presentation will highlight –

- The origins and set up of the TAAG, including the terms of reference and working model
- How consultation formed an integral part of the planning and development of the Australia Precinct, including the architectural design, the delivery of language and cultural content in interpretation.
- Future plans to deliver Taronga's Commitment to Country, including engagement with wider Indigenous bodies and structures and key projects and priorities.

Taronga is very proud of the TAAG and has seen many benefits and positive outcomes already. Along the journey there have been a few learnings and insights that might be helpful for other organisations ready to deepen their connection with Indigenous people.

BIOGRAPHY

Hayley Smithers-Kirk

Hayley is a story teller and is proud and privileged to be a part of Taronga, working on Cammeraigal Country, sharing the story of our place, our people and the wildlife in our

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care. Hayley has a teaching background and began her time with Taronga as a Zoo Education Officer in 1999, completed her Zoo keeping qualifications to learn more about animal behaviour and their care and welfare and studied a Diploma in Journalism to understand storytelling in different ways.

Susan Moylan Combes

Susan's ancestry is Woolwonga and Gurindji from the Northern Territory and she is a member of the Taronga Aboriginal Advisory Group. She has extensive experience working with First Australian communities nationally and internationally, with specific expertise in community consultation, empowerment and the facilitation of voice and storytelling. Susan previously held the positions of Executive Producer ABC's Indigenous Programs Unit and Head of Production, NITV a division of SBS.