



## INTEGRATING THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ACROSS A ZOO

By

<sup>1</sup>Dr Ox Lennon & <sup>1</sup>Amy Hughes

<sup>1</sup>Wellington Zoo Trust, New Zealand

Presenter and Corresponding Author

Amy Hughes  
Amy.hughes@wellingtonzoo.com

### ABSTRACT

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an ambition for the world to work together to build a healthy, peaceful, and prosperous planet. The SDGs are broad and global, with sub-targets expressed at a national scale. This broad framing is a challenge for relatively small organisations such as zoos and aquariums seeking to use the SDGs to frame their sustainability work. However, using the WAZA Sustainability Strategy *Protecting Our Planet* as a base framework has enabled us to understand how to act for the global goals on a local scale. At Wellington Zoo we have designed and implemented a process to integrate the SDGs at an organisational scale; here we will share our approach to help others facing the same challenge.

Led by our Kaupapa (ethos), Me tiaki kia ora! which means we must protect the environment so all life will thrive, integrating SDGs was built into our Zoo strategy. We deliberately did not want to retrofit SDGs to what we were already doing, rather to think about how we could stretch our sustainability work and be ambitious towards contributing to these global goals. Beginning with all 17 SDGs, we used a materiality assessment to refine and select the six SDGs most important to us and our stakeholders. We then used a mind-mapping approach to explore potential achievable and aspirational targets & measures related to each of our chosen goals. The responsibility for taking actions to achieve our targets falls with people across the whole Zoo. An important part of ensuring success with this strategy has been engaging staff members across a variety of teams to ensure our targets are achievable and have wide buy-in, as well as not significantly increasing workloads. This framework will allow us to measure our work against these targets annually, and to continue to improve our sustainability reporting. Our approach is adaptable to other organisations' aspirations and resources, and we present it as a versatile framework for those looking to integrate the broad SDGs at a zoo or aquarium scale.

### BIOGRAPHY

Amy Hughes: After starting at Wellington Zoo as Marketing and Communications Advisor in 2005, Amy has worked in various roles at Wellington Zoo covering learning, visitor experience, marketing and conservation and sustainability. She has overseen the experiential transformation of the Zoo over the last 15 years alongside the physical development of the Zoo of which the new Snow Leopards project is the next stage. She has been a driving force for the Zoo's sustainability work and ensuring that we live our kaupapa Me tiaki, kia ora! Amy is the Conference Chair representative on the International Zoo Educators Board of Directors. She sits on the ZAA Wildlife Conservation Committee; ZAA Conservation Engagement Committee and is an elected member on the ZAA Board.

Dr Ox Lennon. Before joining Wellington Zoo as the Conservation Manager in 2020, Ox completed their PhD in conservation biology at Victoria University of Wellington in 2019. Ox's research focused on translocations of native New Zealand lizards and their conservation outcomes. Ox is a committee member and archivist for the Society for Research on Amphibians and Reptiles New Zealand, and is the treasurer for the IUCN New Zealand National Committee.