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## Project Update - February 2017

The fresh start to the year has provided the team at the Australian Rhino Project with the opportunity to review our progress and focus on the next steps in our mission to establish a breeding herd of rhinos in Australia as an insurance population for the species. We wanted to ensure that we were clear in our next steps before we communicated to our supporters as to the status of the project.

Our initiative is just one small project in the significant web of work that is being undertaken in both Africa and throughout the world to secure a future on our planet for rhinos. We all see the news on a daily basis and know that the challenges facing rhino in South Africa are not diminishing. We admire the number of people who, on a daily basis, commit themselves to protecting and caring for rhinos and those who work towards reducing the demand for rhino horn in Asia.

Over the past three years, we have built significant knowledge in relation to the different stages and requirements involved in relocating rhinos half way around the world. We have spoken to hundreds of people who have offered us support, guidance and advice. In our discussions with our zoological partners and the Australian government, the biggest hurdle in our project has been ensuring compliance with the Australian biosecurity requirements. These regulations are of utmost importance in ensuring diseases that are not present within Australia are not introduced via an importation of rhinos. The Australian Rhino Project fully supports and respects these vital quarantine regulations. Protecting Australian wildlife and other animals in Australia can not be compromised.

In our discussions, it has become evident that we will need to use a third country option to act as an interim step in the relocation process. This will mean that the rhinos will need to be transported from South Africa to a third country to serve a quarantine period, before being relocated to Australia. This is a standard process for many animal importations into Australia and a step that we will now need to take. Our focus will always be on ensuring the well-being of the animals and taking expert advice from the species management team.

The fact is that due to the bio security challenges it could have taken years to bring rhino direct from South Africa – time we all agree the species does not have. Import from a third country may possibly be achieved in months if our discussions are successful.

Following this decision, the Australian Rhino Project board and operational team have conducted workshops with our zoological partners: Taronga Conservation Society and Zoos South Australia, on the critical steps involved in progressing the project in a timely manner. The operational team has been expanded to include species experts from both organisations who are working directly with the Australian Rhino Project to manage the specific requirements and coordinate the third country quarantine.

The fact that we now need to relocate the rhinos via a third country does raise the question as to whether Australia is a viable location for building an insurance population for rhinos. As a team, we have debated long and hard about this decision and we believe that we need to continue to pursue the vision of the project, not only to build an insurance population outside of Africa as an insurance against possible extinction, but also to help ensure we maintain genetic diversity of those rhinos who currently reside in Australia and have been successfully breeding.

This view has the full support of our expert partners at Taronga Conservation Society and Zoos SA. The Commonwealth Government's bio security experts also agree with this new approach by the Australian Rhino Project.

We also constantly have to remind ourselves of the support that was shown by Dr Ian Player for our project and his commitment to establishing insurance populations in locations within Africa and abroad to ensure that rhinos were protected for future generations.

I hope to be in a position to write again to update everyone on progress in the next month or so.

Meanwhile in Australia, we are well progressed in building a home at Monarto for the rhinos in partnership with Zoos SA. Australian Government requirements are that rhinos must be housed in an accredited facility with the appropriate veterinary expertise and rhino handling experience. We have always been committed to building an open range facility and this is why we are so excited to share with you the progress that has been made on the construction of this new open range facility.

The team at Monarto has been working on the 500 hectare open plain area preparing for the arrival for the rhinos for several years. The property has been regenerated and planted with vegetation suitable for the rhino population and significant effort has been put into creating an environment that emulates the wild in Africa. The 11.5 kilometres of external fencing is well progressed and driving along the boundary fences definitely gives you the impression that you are in Africa. We were very proud to be involved in the Zoos SA Monarto Gala Dinner in January that raised funds towards the construction of an additional quarantine facility.

ZooSA and The Australian Rhino Project - Wild Africa



Event Update - Melbourne

One of our very generous supporters, Paul Gardner, will be hosting a fundraising event at a pub in Melbourne this week to raise funds for The Australian Rhino Project. Paul has created a beer, after successfully purchasing the Brewer for a Day experience with Carlton United Breweries at the Melbourne Gala Dinner last year . He will be serving STR (Save The Rhino) beer at The Fringe, 33 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne from 5pm with all proceeds going to The Australian Rhino Project. No RSVP necessary, so feel free to come along, try the beer and support the project.

**You are invited**

**March 1st from 5pm  
at The Fringe  
33 Lt Lonsdale St  
Melbourne**

**Save  
the  
Rhino**



**100% of STR beer sales go to  
Australian Rhino Project**

**RSVP Not necessary**

**[theaustralianrhinoproject.org](http://theaustralianrhinoproject.org)**

The board and team at the Australian Rhino Project thank you for your ongoing support of the project and we appreciate all your messages that we regularly receive. The project is a very complex mission and we appreciate your understanding as we tackle the different milestones required to make our dream a reality.

We encourage anyone with questions to reach out to our team and we would be only too happy to respond to you at any time.

Allan Davies  
Chairman

on behalf of the Australian Rhino Project Board and Operational Team

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The Australian Rhino Project is a registered Australian charity (ABN:14168809158).  
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