LOCATION
Badger Creek Rd, Healesville,
3777, Victoria, Australia
Phone: 61-03-5957 2800
Fax: 61-3-5957 2870
URL: http://www.zoo.org.au/
healesville

DESCRIPTION
The dingo facilities were upgraded to provide a larger area for the dingoes and more interpretation opportunities for zoo visitors. Dingo Country was designed to simulate the sub-alpine environment of Victoria. The exhibit combines a hillscape of rocky outcrops, tree falls and water bodies that create a backdrop for viewing the dingoes.

The focal point of the exhibit is a purpose built alpine hut providing intimate views of the dingoes and interpretation about the cultural history of dingoes.

Rough sawn timber and rusted steel were used for an authentic impression of the sub-alpine environment. The new enclosure is themed around an alpine hut. The hut has been named Mason’s Hut as a tribute to the longest serving employee of the sanctuary, Kevin Mason. Kevin began working at the Sanctuary back in May 1960.

SIZE
The dingo enclosure is approximately 820m², with 80m² sectioned off for visitor / dingo interaction. 789m² is allocated for visitors, however almost half of this is garden. The 19m² refers to the Alpine Hut.

Staff areas occupy about 245m². This includes cleaning, storage, keeper access in and around the enclosure, and vehicle access.

Behind the dingo enclosure are additional yards and walkways used to house and rotate the dingoes off display.

COST: AUD 350,000
OPENING DATE: 1 April 2010
DESIGN: Beginning: 2009

• landscape architecture: Xylem Landscape Architects, Preston, Victoria, Australia
• graphic design, fabrication: Arterial Design, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia
• structural consulting and civil engineering: Kersulting, Glen Iris, Victoria, Australia
Space allocation in square meters:

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<tr>
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**CONSTRUCTION**

**Beginning:**
- earth and rock mounds:
- hut structure: Healesville Sanctuary, Healesville, Victoria, Australia
- fences, gates, paths and screen planting:
  Healesville Sanctuary, Healesville, Victoria, Australia

**FEATURES DEDICATED TO ANIMALS**

The sloping terrain provides climbing and viewing opportunities for the dingoes. There is plenty of tree coverage within the enclosure, offering shady areas for the dingoes to rest. Alternatively, there is also a purpose-built underground den. The pond allows the dingoes to cool off in hot weather, and they also love to roll around in the sand as a form of environmental enrichment.

Three dingo pairs are rotated between the exhibit and the off-display enclosures. At night, they are locked in.

**FEATURES DEDICATED TO KEEPERS**

Zoo staff access the dingo enclosure via the education / tour group section, which is separated from the main viewing area by a wooden farm gate with a “do not enter” sign. The education / tour group section is still clearly visible from the main viewing area, so the staff entry into the dingo enclosure is disguised as an old fashioned outdoor toilet.

A staff work and storage area is hidden behind a large retaining wall at the back of the enclosure.

**FEATURES DEDICATED TO VISITORS**

Visitors can have close encounters with the animals in a rustic ‘camp’ through keeper presentations and through large glass panels with expansive views into ‘Dingo Country’. They can visit the rustic alpine hut and listen to stories from the old bushman, or hear the famous dingo howl. Regular keeper talks inform about the dingoes. A small portion of the enclosure is allocated for ‘special moments’ with bag / coat hooks etc.

Visitors to the Sanctuary may encounter a keeper with one of the adult dingoes on a daily walk around the grounds.
INTERPRETATION
Wooden silhouettes in the shape of a dingo are positioned randomly in the gardens leading up to the exhibit. Common questions, misconceptions and brief facts about dingoes are painted on these, in order to generate interest and curiosity among visitors before arriving at the exhibit.

Signage used are made of rustic materials in a linear format to evoke the movement of the dingo through the landscape.

As visitors wonder through the outdoor viewing area into the enclosure, a row of low-height tables containing information is available for further reading.

Inside Mason’s Hut is a bench seat. Built into this seat is a window box displaying a dingo skull for visitors to get a close-up look.

Mounted on the walls of the Hut is a feral cat skin and a red fox skin. Feral cats and foxes are competitors for food and territory, and are both considered pests in Australia.

There is also a large family tree displayed in the Hut, showing where the dingo fits in and its connection to wolves and domestic dogs.

MANAGEMENT
Each dingo gets walked every third day. The dingoes are put on a leash and walked around the Sanctuary, 2 dingoes at a time. The walk around in the gardens is at the dingo’s pace, stopping to let them smell things etc, rather than a formal "walk" along the tracks. When the keepers bring the dingoes out of the exhibit, visitors have the opportunity to ask questions and to briefly interact with the dingoes for about 15 minutes. Otherwise the dingoes get restless.

The old enclosures are used to rotate dingoes between exhibit and off display.

The maintenance required for the dingo exhibit, is managing the gardens (seasonal), tidying up after the dingoes (every few days) and replacing bedding in the dingo dens (every 4 - 6 weeks).

CONSERVATION
The main objective of this dingo exhibit is for educational purposes.

The main beams used for the hut were second hand and sourced locally.